



Diversity, Inclusion and Social Mobility Annual Report

2024-25

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Foreword

At the NHSBSA, we want to be the best place our colleagues have ever worked. That ambition sits at the heart of everything we do - because we know that our people are crucial to our overall success and collectively contribute to building a positive culture.

Creating a strong sense of community and belonging is fundamental to what makes the NHSBSA such a special place to work. Our approach to diversity, inclusion and social mobility is central to that. We want every colleague to feel valued, heard and empowered to be themselves - so they can thrive, grow and reach their full potential.

Our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for 2022-25 outlined our bold vision and objectives to help us achieve this. Over the past year, we've made meaningful progress, using creative and inclusive approaches to tackle challenges and drive change. This report highlights the impact of that work and the positive steps we've taken together.

2024-25 was also the first year of the NHSBSA's ambitious five-year strategy, where we set out a clear commitment, as part of our people strategic goal, to being a truly inclusive employer where all colleagues feel they belong and having a diverse workforce that is representative of the population at all levels.

Through our environmental, social and governance (ESG) strategic goal, we're working to become recognised as a top employer for social mobility, where we support colleagues from a variety of backgrounds and provide opportunities for people to progress and develop based on merit. We want to make a meaningful difference to the communities in which we work and serve.

I'm incredibly proud that we have made a bold commitment to being an organisation that truly cares. While we're proud of how far we've come, we know there's more to do. Becoming a truly inclusive organisation takes ongoing commitment, fresh thinking, and courageous action. By keeping this focus, we'll continue building a workplace where everyone can flourish - and where diversity and inclusion are not just values, but everyday realities.



Michael Brodie
Chief Executive
NHS Business Services Authority



Mark Dibble
Chief People Officer

Introduction

This report summarises our progress and key achievements in 2024-25. It also reflects our legal requirements under the Equality Act (2010) and Public Sector Equality Duty (2011).

It demonstrates how we're working towards our key aims, to make sure the NHSBSA:

- has a diverse and highly engaged workforce at all levels, representative of the population we serve. We know this leads to better decision making and innovation, and is fundamental to the success of our organisation
- is truly inclusive, where all colleagues feel able to be themselves at work and have a voice, so they can be at their best, and reach their full potential

Our people are at the heart of our approach in our aspiration of being an inclusive workplace. Attracting a diverse workforce, supporting and developing people to ensure a workforce fit for the future, and enabling people to achieve their aspirations is key. Achieving these ambitions will ensure we contribute to making the NHSBSA the best place any of us have worked, and retaining our diverse, talented colleagues.

We have made progress in our social mobility work over the last year. This has involved collecting data on our colleagues' socio-economic background for the first time, benchmarking against the Social Mobility Employer Index and using the outputs and best practice to shape and develop our action plans. These plans set out our approach to help make a meaningful impact for colleagues and in our communities.

We continue to work with key stakeholders, such as our commercial and procurement colleagues, making sure social value is included in our processes. We work with operational colleagues to complete impact assessments to help shape the accessibility and inclusiveness of our services. Our colleague networks also help shape our colleagues' experiences and inform our approach.

Our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for 2022-2025 has provided a framework under which we have achieved so much. Our work continues with the next phase of our strategy for 2025-29, with our key principles, best practice, evidence and data guiding our aims and objectives. We have incorporated our approach to social mobility into our future strategy, bringing socio-economic inclusion into our objectives. By taking an intersectional, person-centred approach, we aim to achieve more meaningful and targeted outcomes, and social mobility will be an integral part of our inclusive offering.

These have been our priority areas over the past three years:

Diverse talent attraction and inclusive recruitment

Enabling the successes of underrepresented groups through inclusive talent attraction and recruitment processes, building skill and knowledge in employability.

Development and retention of underrepresented colleagues

Providing tailored development opportunities for colleagues to engage with and access development opportunities, helping to remove barriers and level the playing field.

Cultural competency

Building leadership knowledge and skill through transformational programmes which aim to create organisational change and impact more widely into the community, such as reciprocal mentoring for inclusion.

Social impact

This includes supporting commercial and procurement work to increase social value, doing impact assessments to build diversity and inclusion into our work, our services and our culture, and working with community organisations to create a positive impact.

We continue to assess our performance annually by participating in external benchmarking and accreditation schemes, including Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion’s (enei) Talent, Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) benchmark, Disability Confident and Employers for Carers - Carer Confident accreditation.

This helps us benchmark and understand current performance in line with best practice and how we can improve our internal and external inclusion work. We have now entered the Social Mobility Employer Index, ranking 134th on our first entry.



Maintained Gold Award standard in enei’s TIDE benchmark.



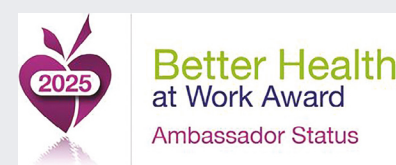
Ranked in top 50 Inspiring Workplaces UK and Ireland, ranking first in public sector category.



Shortlisted for Workplace Social Mobility and Inclusion in enei’s Inclusivity Excellence Awards.



Maintained the Carer Confident Level 2: Accomplished accreditation from Employers for Carers.



Achieved ‘Ambassador’ status from Better Health at Work Awards.



Maintained our Disability Confident Leader status.

Executive summary

Throughout 2024-2025 we have continued to make progress with ambitious objectives. Here are some results of this work.

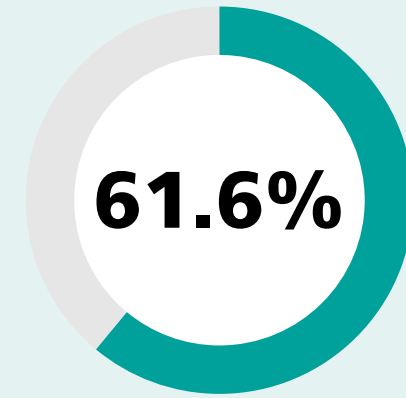
In the last year we:

- retained our 'Gold Standard Employer' status in enei's TIDE benchmark, ranked first for the fourth year running
- achieved 134th place in the Social Mobility Employer Index, benchmarking against best practice and using feedback in our future approach
- maintained Disability Confident Leader status
- awarded Carer Confident Level 2: Accomplished accreditation for our commitment to creating a supportive and inclusive workplace for carers - achieved through collaboration and support initiatives with input from our Disability and Neurodiversity Network
- achieved Ambassador Status, the highest award from the Better Health at Work Awards, given to organisations that consistently achieve the Maintaining Excellence level
- collected socio-economic background workforce data - achieving a 48% response rate and a baseline for representation, with 44% of the workforce being from lower socio-economic backgrounds
- shortlisted in top three for workplace social mobility and inclusion in the enei Inclusivity Excellence Awards for our work with the Newcastle Women's Swahili group
- increased engagement and membership in Colleague Experience Networks - maintaining visibility and engagement through network activities, with all networks delivering awareness campaigns and events
- delivered the third cohort of our bespoke Reciprocal Mentoring for Inclusion Programme - focused on sharing learning and providing development between partners, with the aim of increasing knowledge and skill, and achieving our aims relating to inclusion
- delivered the third cohort of our development programme for our Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) colleagues. This is focused on leadership development, with taught sessions partnering a placement or stretch project so colleagues get practical experience to support career aspirations
- published our Gender Pay Gap report and updated our action plan, aimed at reducing our pay gap and increasing the representation of women in senior leadership roles. Our Women's Network supported this work by providing insights and ideas for improvements
- provided awareness, learning and support by delivering 16 inclusion events, 21 We CARE cafes and 42 wellbeing awareness sessions – providing colleagues with safe spaces to connect and support each other
- continued to attend and support events in our communities, such as Pride and Sparkle Weekend

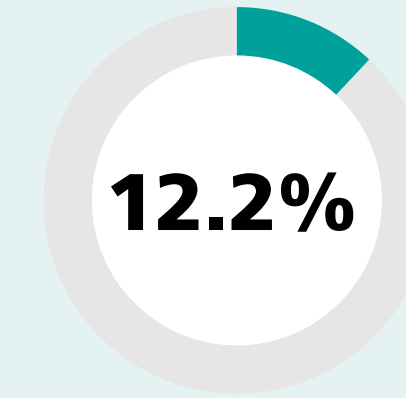
Insights from our workforce data



Headcount at 31 March 2025 was 5,118



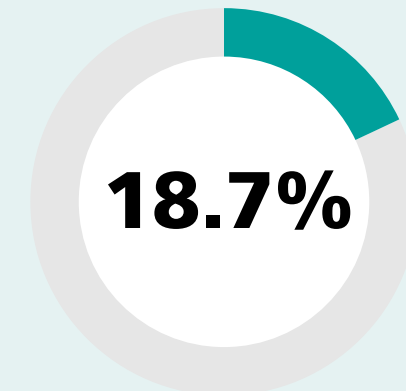
Female colleagues account for 61.6% of our workforce - a minimal change between April 2024 and March 2025



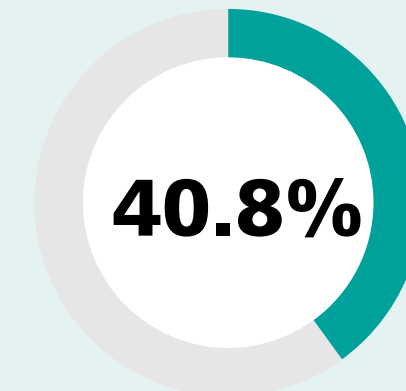
Internal progression rates show that women, men, ethnic minority and colleagues with a disability progress around the organisation average of 12.2%



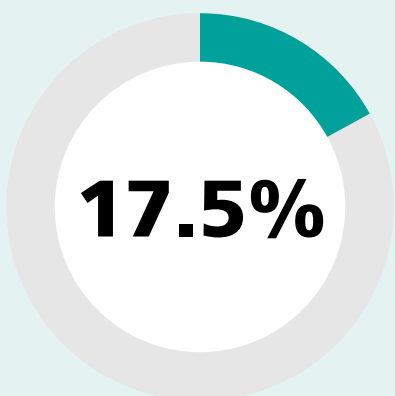
32,142 job applications were received for NHSBSA vacancies, with 4,862 candidates shortlisted and 1,432 new starters appointed between April 2024 and March 2025



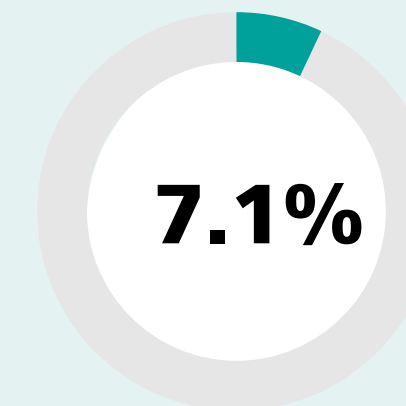
Ethnic minority groups account for 18.7% of our workforce, a significant increase of 3.1% on the previous year



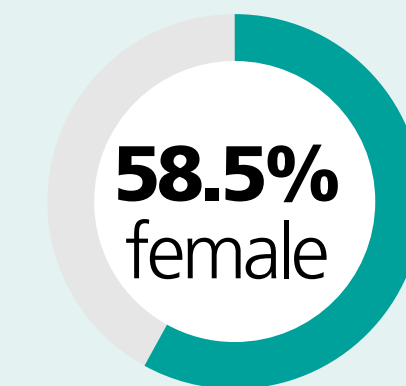
Christianity remains the most common religion or belief at 40.8% of colleagues, Atheism is second with 26.5% of colleagues



17.5% identify with a religion or belief other than Christianity and Atheism, up from 16.9% the previous year

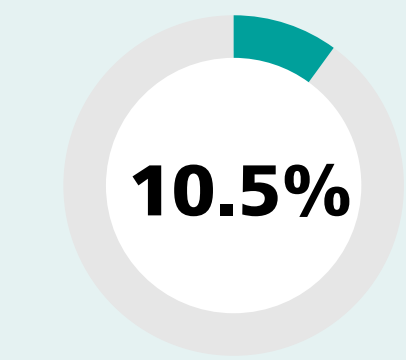


7.1% of colleagues disclosed that they identify as LGBTQ+, an increase of 0.6% on the previous year

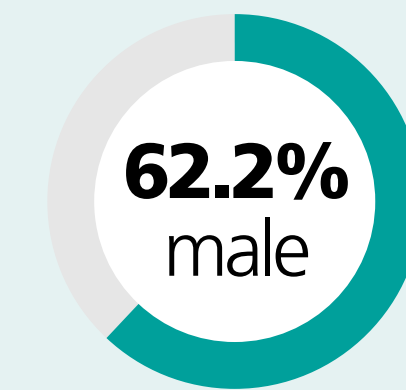


Our largest age group is the 25-44 years group, which represents 58.5% of our female colleagues and 62.2% of male colleagues

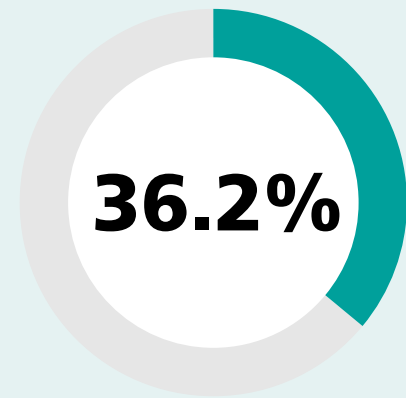
61% of colleagues are based at one of our North East sites, **24%** in the North West, **12%** are homeworkers, and a small percentage of colleagues are based in the South East and Yorkshire & Humber



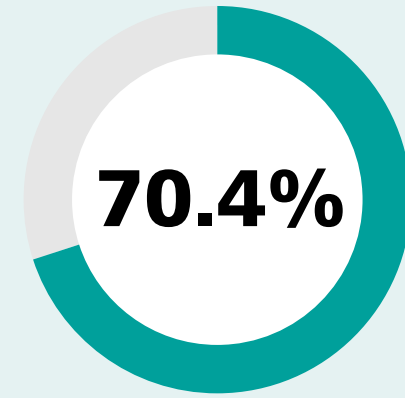
Colleagues who disclosed a disability or long-term health condition rose to 10.5%, up 1.6% from 8.9% in the previous year



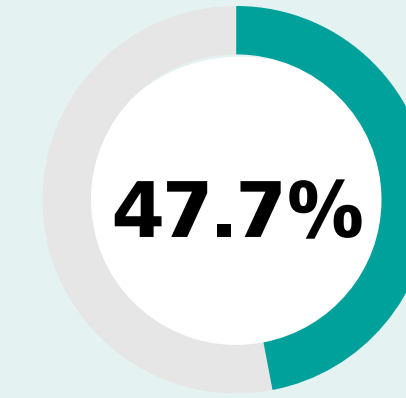
Insights from our workforce data



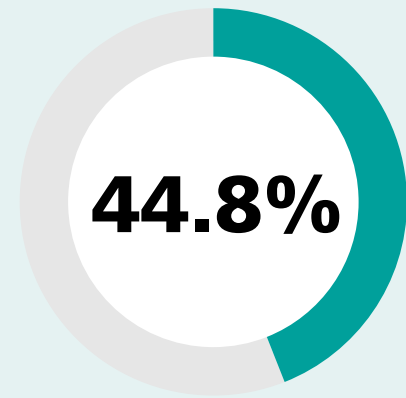
Most of our Directorates have a majority female population, except for Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT), which has 36.2% female population



Ethnic minority groups made up 70.4% of the total applications in the last year, up from 63.3% the year previous, with shortlisted and appointed rates continuing to be strong this year



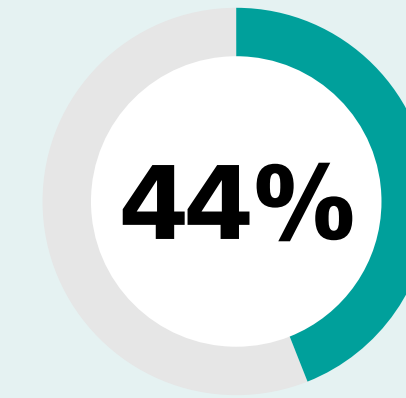
Socio-economic background data was collected for the first time this year, achieving a 47.7% response rate from colleagues



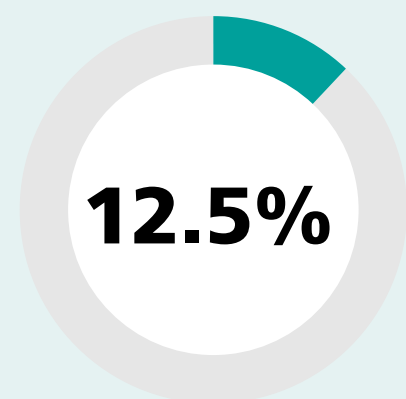
Middlebrook is again our most ethnically diverse workplace with 44.8% of colleagues being from ethnic minority groups

Application, shortlisted and appointed rates have all increased this year for colleagues with a disability

LGBTQ+ applicants have decreased slightly at both shortlisted and appointed stages



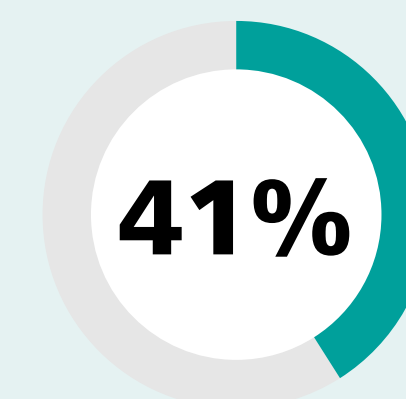
The NHSBSA's socio-economic profile shows we are 5% above the UK benchmark of 39%, with 44% of colleagues from lower socio-economic backgrounds



Our homeworking colleague group has the highest proportion of colleagues with a disability at 12.5%



374 colleagues left the NHSBSA during 2023-24 and data shows that males, ethnic minorities, and LGBTQ+ colleagues have a disproportionately high leave rate when compared to the workforce percentages



The socio economic status of all pay band groupings are currently above the UK benchmark, including our senior leader community, who are representative at 41%

Our people and achievements

Awards and recognition

Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (enei) TIDE – Gold Award

We were delighted to retain first place and 'Gold Standard Employer' status for our Diversity and Inclusion work in the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion's (ENEI) 'Talent, Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation' (TIDE) for the fourth year running. The evaluation measures the performance of participating organisations, benchmarking those taking part against each other, with the highest performing organisations awarded the Gold Standard.



Disability Confident Leader Status

We are a Disability Confident Leader (Level 3) in the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) Disability Confident Scheme, the highest level that can be achieved. To achieve this, we've demonstrated our commitment to having fully inclusive recruitment and training practices, supporting the retention and development of colleagues who have a disability and working with charities focused on disabilities in the community.



Employers for Carers; Carer Confident – Level 2

We have maintained Carer Confident Accreditation, Level 2: Accomplished by Employers for Carers, in recognition of the support we have put in place for colleagues with caring responsibilities. Providing a supportive and inclusive working environment for those undertaking these responsibilities or who may need to in the future is vital in particular, so that we can attract and retain carers in our workforce. This accreditation provides a best practice framework and guidance so that we can achieve this, being a positive and inclusive workplace for all.



Social Mobility Employer Index

For the first time, we entered the Social Mobility Employer Index, benchmarking ourselves against this best practice framework. We were thrilled to have ranked 134th and we've used the feedback received to shape our plans and approach to social mobility at the NHSBSA for the future.



Our people

Colleague Experience and Social Impact team

Our Colleague Experience and Social Impact team lead the NHSBSA's approach to diversity and inclusion. Our approach is people first, seeking to closely align our accessibility, inclusion, wellbeing, safeguarding and community engagement work. The team lead our colleague networks and support them to bring their ideas and feedback forward and to work collaboratively on events, which helps us champion colleague voice and bring an intersectional approach to our work.

The team have delivered several key projects with outstanding results, which have been impactful for a range of our colleagues. Some of those projects have been recognised in the accreditations and awards received. The team work in collaboration with our HR, Talent Acquisition and Organisation Design and Development teams as part of a wider People team, to ensure inclusion and wellbeing are fully embedded into all our people practices and policies.

Our governance

We have two main committees, our Wellbeing and Inclusion Committee and Accessibility Committee. They provide key strategic oversight and are a decision-making body for diversity, inclusion and accessibility in the NHSBSA. The Wellbeing and Inclusion Committee is chaired by the Chief Executive as Executive Board Champion for Diversity and Inclusion. The Accessibility Committee is chaired by the Chief People Officer. Membership of both committees comprises of senior leaders, the Colleague Experience and Social Impact team, key stakeholders from across the organisation, trade union representatives and Co-Chairs of our Wellbeing and Inclusion Networks.





NHSBSA lived experience networks

Our lived experience colleague networks cover the four key inclusion groups in our organisation:

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)
- Disability and neurodiversity
- LGBTQ+
- Women

The networks focus on the lived experiences of their members, supporting the organisation to deliver its strategic aims.

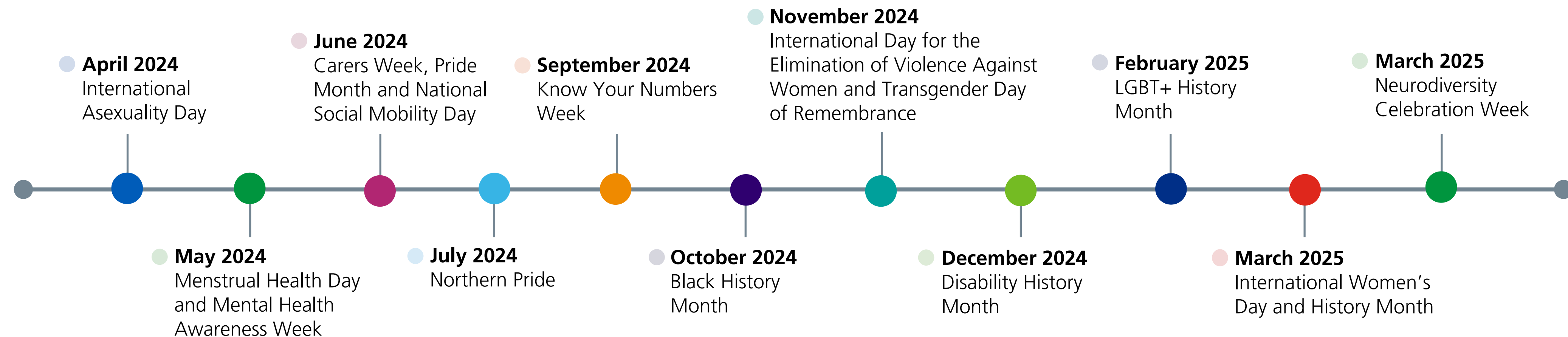
Our lived experience networks are now in their fifth year and their support and commitment to helping the Colleague Experience and Social Impact team achieve inclusion aims has been invaluable. Each network contributes towards our work on gaining accreditations and achieving our benchmarking goals, the passion and input provided is vital to our work. We are grateful to our networks for the support they give to our programmes of work such as Reciprocal Mentoring for Inclusion, colleague development, external events and support and network events and awareness sessions, which in turn positively impacts wider engagement with colleagues across the organisation.



Visibility, involvement and engagement on diversity and inclusion

Colleague engagement

Each year through a collaborative approach, a communications plan is created to engage colleagues in our diversity and inclusion work. Our Colleague Experience and Social Impact team, the Communications and Marketing team and our Colleague Networks work together to deliver an amazing programme of awareness campaigns and events which are engaging for colleagues and support our strategic objectives, to build awareness and understanding. This approach also provides opportunities for colleagues to connect with each other and access peer support. The networks supported delivery of 16 inclusion events, 21 'We CARE Cafes' and 42 wellbeing and inclusion awareness sessions throughout the year, providing safe spaces for colleagues to connect, learn and support each other. Below are some of the highlights that have taken place each month.



Leadership visibility and involvement

Our Leadership Team model the inclusive and caring values of our organisation. The Chair of the NHSBSA is our Non-Executive Champion for Diversity and Inclusion and each of our Lived Experience Colleague Networks is championed by a Non-Executive Director. They play a key role in maintaining a focus on diversity and inclusion on matters considered by the Board, and in demonstrating the Board's commitment to inclusion.

The Board and Leadership Team often attend the events and sessions arranged by our networks, including Pride events in our local communities. In addition, the Leadership Team, along with our wider senior leadership community, have been a regular part of our successful

Reciprocal Mentoring for Inclusion Programme and our development programmes for colleagues. They also attend and support our events, often providing insightful introductions and welcomes.

Regular communications focusing on diversity and inclusion issues, from a personal and corporate perspective, help to engage colleagues and support our inclusive culture. Communications have included a regular focus in the Chief Executive's fortnightly bulletin, blogs, interviews and social media activity featuring our other Directors and Chief Officers. The response to these has been fantastic, with very high levels of engagement from colleagues.



Social mobility in the community

Over the past year, we've strengthened our commitment to social mobility, providing opportunities and supporting people to succeed, regardless of background, education or family circumstances.

Working across teams, we've built meaningful connections to inspire career aspirations and develop a diverse talent pipeline that reflects the communities we serve. Our focus includes empowering and enabling:

- young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds
- schools with high free school meal eligibility or in areas of deprivation
- disadvantaged groups (e.g. care experienced people, refugees, displaced people and those distant from the labour market)

We take a place-based, data-informed approach to reach the most disadvantaged communities. Our social mobility targeting tool, developed with national data and in partnership with charities like the Careers and Enterprise Company, helps us focus our efforts where they're needed most.



Volunteering in action

In early 2025, 41 volunteers from 5 directorates supported two fantastic charities:

- Action for Children's Pop-Up Prom – 13 volunteers supported 65 students from 32 North East schools
- Love, Amelia – 28 volunteers helped families experiencing hardship

Building a brighter future: our 3-Year outreach plan

We've launched a three-year outreach plan focused on:

- career insights
- skills development
- workplace experiences
- exposure to new opportunities

This plan aligns with the Careers and Enterprise Company's Employer Standards and other key benchmarks.

Highlights from the past year:

- reached 200+ students through virtual career insight sessions with Skills Builder Partnership
- delivered face-to-face outreach to 2,300+ secondary students in social mobility cold spots
- participated in careers panels and workshops for non-Russell Group university students in the North East

Work experience

In July 2024, we hosted two cohorts of Year 10 and Year 12 students from across the North East:

- Year 10: 13 students from 6 schools
- Year 12: 15 students selected from 57 applicants across 10 schools and colleges

With 50% from non-selective state schools and priority areas, we provided laptops and lunch to ensure barriers to access were removed. Students ended the week with group presentations and glowing feedback:

“I’ve now found the path I want to take and learned so much about the NHSBSA.”

“This placement helped me understand the non-clinical side of the NHS and develop my teamwork and communication skills.”



Inspiring futures in NHS Finance at Fleetwood High School

In December 2024, working in collaboration with our finance teams and the Skills Development Network, we delivered financial literacy lessons to 20 Year 10 students at Fleetwood High School - a school with higher than the national average percentage of students receiving free school meals. Linking the maths curriculum to careers, the sessions aimed to bridge the gap between everyday financial decisions such as budgeting and the larger-scale financial responsibilities managed by NHS professionals.

Students were asked to score their interest in an NHS finance career both before and after the sessions. The students’ likelihood of considering a career in NHS finance more than doubled, which was a great result and Fleetwood High School were also delighted with the sessions

Social mobility in our workplace

We're proud to be working towards becoming a top employer for social mobility, supporting colleagues from all backgrounds and enabling progression based on talent.

Over the past year, we've developed a data informed approach to embed socio-economic inclusion at the NHSBSA. A key focus is building a positive narrative, so everyone understands its importance.

We're now a lead signatory of the Social Mobility Pledge, committing to four core areas:

Outreach

Engaging with schools and colleges to offer mentoring, career advice, and enrichment experiences.

Access

Providing structured work experience, internships, and apprenticeships for people from all backgrounds.

Recruitment

Using open recruitment practices that promote equal opportunity.

Progression

Ensuring fair career progression for colleagues from underprivileged backgrounds.

National Social Mobility Day

In June 2024, we celebrated National Social Mobility Day with an insight and awareness masterclass, in partnership with Bridges of Hope and Blackbullion. Over 100 colleagues joined to learn more about social mobility and our role in driving change.

Social Mobility Employer Index

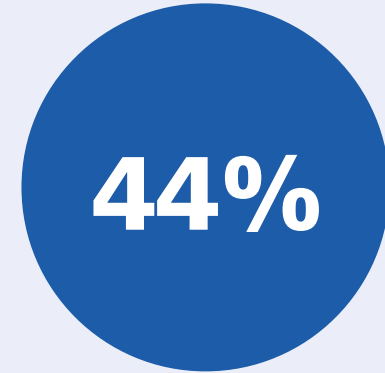
We undertook the Social Mobility Employer Index benchmarking for the first time, placing 134th and receiving detailed feedback to guide and shape our plans towards our aspiration of being a truly inclusive culture. To support this aspiration and to encourage openness, colleagues are sharing their stories about their experiences, with senior leaders leading the way and sharing their personal stories which has brought some brilliant feedback and engagement.



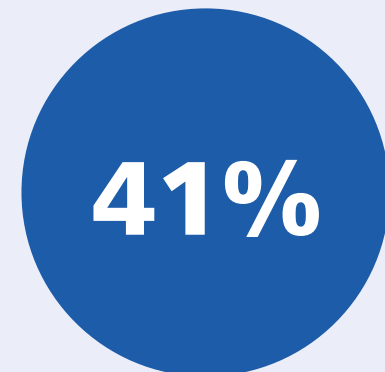
Understanding our workforce

In September 2024, we took an ambitious step to measure our organisation’s socio-economic diversity. We know that understanding this is key to our success in this area. We launched our socio-economic data collection using guidance from the Social Mobility Commission and focusing on four key questions which colleagues responded to. We were thrilled to achieve a 47.7% response rate to this collection, which gives us a great starting point from which we can move forward confidently.

We will monitor this data to ensure that we continue to be representative overall, and at all levels across the organisation, and we will use the data to shape our approach to recruitment, development and progression of our workforce.



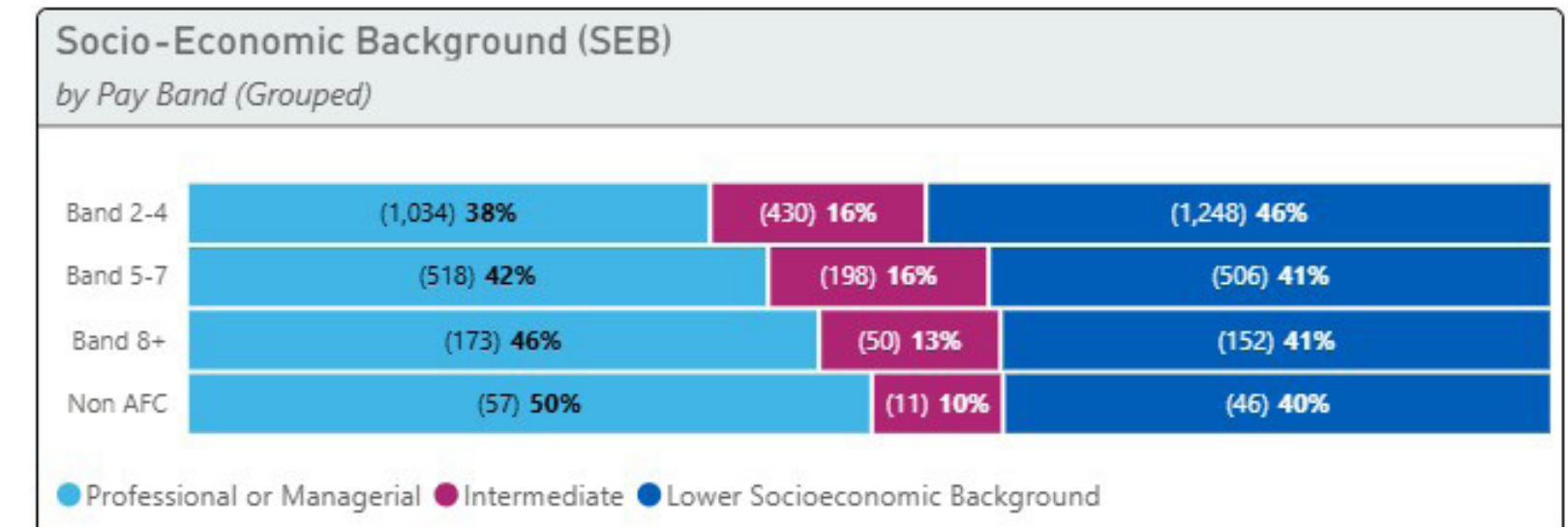
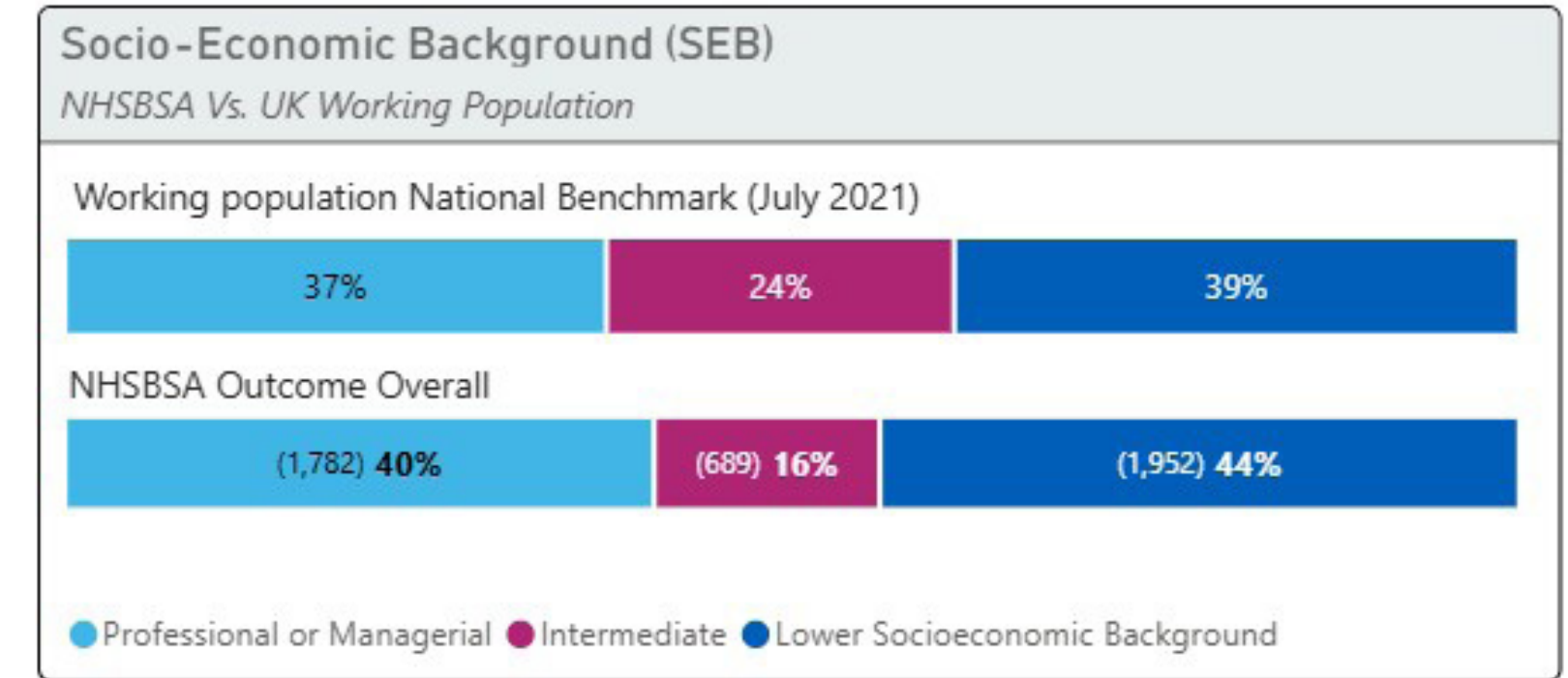
The NHSBSA’s socio-economic profile shows that we are above the UK benchmark for colleagues from lower socio-economic backgrounds, at 44%. This is 5% above the UK benchmark, which is 39%.



The data also shows that pay band groupings are above the UK benchmark, with bands 8a and above at 41%, meaning our leadership community is representative of those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

This demonstrates that we are recruiting a diverse and representative workforce in terms of socio-economic background and that when colleagues from a lower socio-economic background join us, they can progress within the organisation.

This data will continue to be collected and analysed through ESR, to provide insight and to shape our approach to social mobility in the workplace.



Building capability on diversity and inclusion

As well as increasing awareness and understanding of diversity, inclusion and social mobility among colleagues, we have delivered a wide range of initiatives and programmes designed to increase the capability and confidence of colleagues and managers to help them effectively contribute to the diversity and inclusion agenda, such as reciprocal mentoring for inclusion, our let's talk about series and our wellbeing and inclusion awareness sessions and events.



Reciprocal Mentoring for Inclusion programme

Reciprocal Mentoring for Inclusion is a structured programme where a senior leader and a colleague with a specific lived experience form a mentoring partnership to learn from one another. This unique approach fosters mutual understanding and growth, encouraging a two-way exchange of knowledge, perspectives, and experiences.

The programme is designed so that both participants in the mentoring partnership actively mentor and learn from each other. The Lived Experience partner in the partnership shares their personal and lived experiences, offering valuable insights to the senior leader to develop their inclusion knowledge and build on our organisational commitment to being a truly inclusive employer where all colleagues feel they belong. The Senior Leader provides mentoring in an area of expertise or knowledge relevant to their role, which supports our strategic goals of developing and creating a diverse workforce which is representative of the communities we serve. This reciprocal relationship ensures both parties benefit and grow from the mentoring exchange.

Objectives

- to improve knowledge and understanding of inclusion through sharing of personal experience, to influence change and increase allyship within the organisation
- to provide colleagues who may be underrepresented in our organisation with opportunities, knowledge and skills, to influence change and to feel empowered to make change for themselves

Aims

- build awareness of the lived experience of others and in doing so, illuminate where change might be needed for enhanced fairness and justice
- build self-awareness to better understand how our beliefs, behaviours and attitudes are informed by our culture and life experience
- create alliances that change the organisational system for the better and dismantle systemic barriers that marginalise underrepresented groups
- build knowledge and skills – organisational norms, equity, inclusion and diversity, influencing skills, confidence, allyship capabilities, inclusive leadership for better engagement
- improve representation of a diverse workforce at more senior levels

Lived experiences involved

The lived experiences shared within the Reciprocal Mentoring for Inclusion Programme include:

- Disability and neurodiversity (including carers)
- Ethnicity (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnicities)
- LGBTQ+
- Mental Health
- Women
- Socio-economic background (newly introduced for the fourth cohort to begin in 2025)

The inclusion of socio-economic background aims to further enhance the programme's commitment to socio-economic inclusion.

The programme has already seen incredible success since we launched the first cohort four years ago, and we have since paired 62 individuals from across the organisation into reciprocal mentoring partnerships who have successfully completed their programme. This cohort matched 13 senior leaders with partners from a range of different lived experience backgrounds.

One participant shared their experience:

"I loved this unique opportunity to gain insight into a senior role and learn about challenges and successes. My partner was kind and patient, expanding my horizons and giving me a new perspective on the organisation."

Another participant emphasised the reciprocal nature:

"You will be surprised at how much you learn about yourself and your partner, about others' experiences within the organisation, and about how rewarding it is to genuinely connect with someone who may see things differently than you."

All the Senior Leader partners involved in this cohort of our Reciprocal Mentoring for Inclusion Programme said that they have taken significant learning away from their participation, with the belief that their improved inclusion knowledge and awareness will positively influence the business decisions they make in the future.

Over 25% of the lived experience partners in this cohort have already achieved further development opportunities since taking part in the programme, and they report that the growth in their skills, knowledge and confidence has enabled them to succeed.



Black and Minority Ethnic Leadership Development Programme

Maximising colleague potential

Over the past three years, we successfully rolled out this programme across the organisation. The programme is aimed at colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds and is designed to provide development and practical experience to colleagues regardless of band and experience, helping to develop their skills, knowledge and confidence to ultimately achieve their career aspirations. Colleagues have been keen to be involved and the outcomes, evaluation and feedback gathered have been very positive.

It was important to have a dedicated programme for BAME colleagues as we know that those colleagues may face barriers and additional hurdles to overcome. The programme works really well because alongside the taught course, secondments, placements and stretch projects are undertaken by participants which align with their career aspirations. This ensures they obtain practical experience which gives them confidence and experience to progress to new roles.

The programme is based on nine dimensions of the NHS Leadership Academy's Healthcare Leadership Model. By participating in this programme, the delegates were able to deepen and widen their understanding of what it meant to be an effective leader and how to influence, lead and manage others.

The key outcomes for delegates completing the programme were to:

- build leadership resilience and confidence through the successful challenging of potential and perceived barriers
- improve accountability and engagement
- develop a coaching style of leadership in line with a wide range of leadership principles that are appropriate to the new world of virtual leadership
- understand own impact and adjust style for improved inclusivity and enhanced organisational culture
- understand own self-worth and how best to bring our best selves forward in the workplace and in interviews

Feedback and outcomes:

Over 50 colleagues have participated in the three cohorts of this programme so far, with the following outcomes:

- 100% of colleagues said the programme met their expectations
- 56.5% of participants have reported significant progression as a result of the programme
- satisfaction scores average 4.8 out of 5
- completed three cohorts with a 100% completion rate



BAME Leadership Development Programme

In pursuit of purpose

My journey with the NHSBSA began in January 2022, when I joined the Payment Support team (PST) within Customer Service Supports. From day one, working here has been an incredible experience. I feel truly content in such a positive environment, surrounded by cheerful, smiling faces every day. It's the kind of atmosphere that keeps you going even when challenges arise. What makes the NHSBSA special is how people genuinely listen. That simple but powerful act has made my journey not only enjoyable but deeply rewarding. Each day brings a new opportunity to learn and grow, paving the way for even more positive possibilities.

One of the most influential parts of my journey has been the BAME Network. It connected me with individuals from diverse backgrounds and created a space where I could grow, learn, and advocate for something bigger than myself. In September 2024, I was selected for the BAME Leadership Development Programme, a milestone that marked a turning point in my career.

As part of the programme, I completed a six-month placement with the Organisation Design and Development team, and in February 2025, I delivered my final presentation, which was well-received for both its content and delivery.

What made the programme especially impactful was its powerful course content especially topics on compassionate leadership and coaching. It helped me better understand not just how to lead others but how to lead myself. It expanded my thinking, boosted my confidence, and gave me the tools to approach leadership with authenticity and purpose. My placement experience brought all of that learning to life. I had the opportunity to contribute to meaningful organisational initiatives, collaborate with different teams, and observe leadership in action. Being part of a strategic team helped me understand the wider impact of effective leadership and the importance of nurturing a culture of continuous development. It not only expanded my skillset but gave me the clarity and confidence to pursue a new direction in my career.

I'm now proud to share that I've stepped into a new position as an Operational Trainer at the NHSBSA. This role feels like the natural next step in my pursuit of purpose. The placement with Organisation Design and Development and the BAME Leadership Development Programme gave me that extra push-the confidence, clarity, and courage-to move forward and I came out stronger for it. I look forward to continuing this journey, growing in my role, sharing my knowledge, and making a meaningful impact.



Saju Selvan
Operational trainer
Citizen Services

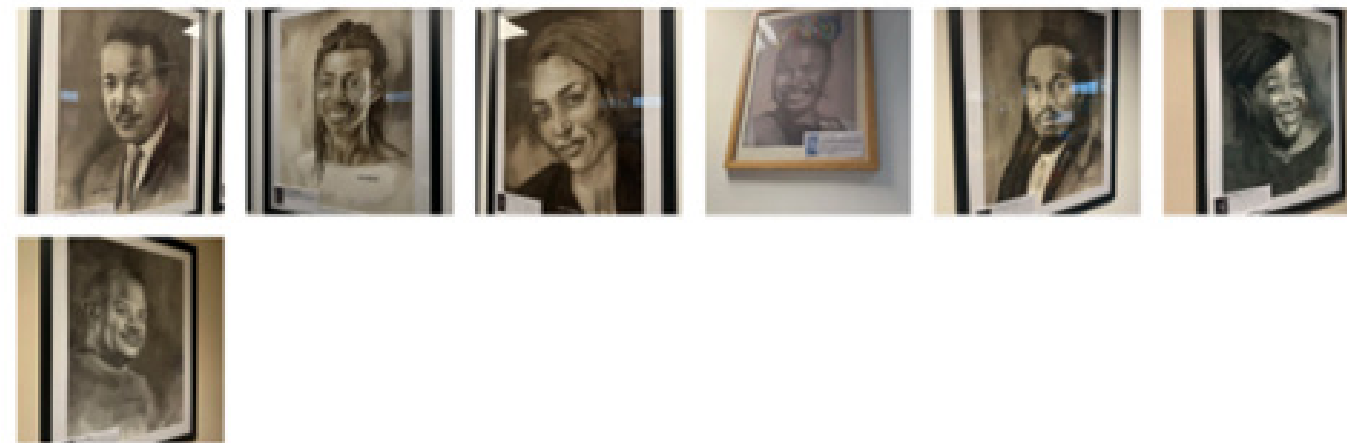
Our highlights

BAME Colleague Network

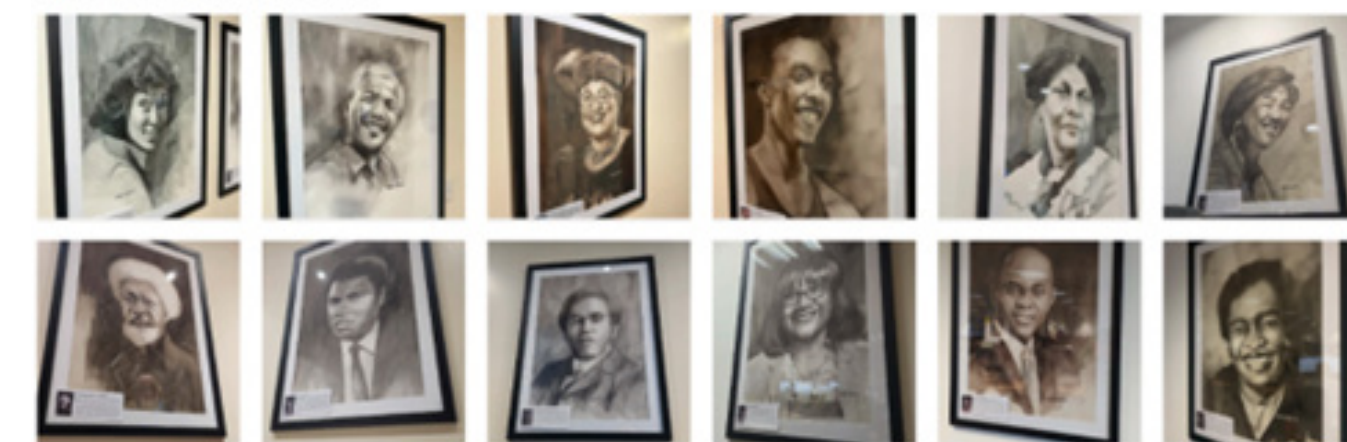
This year our network colleagues celebrated International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and hosted Dr Jacqui Dyer MBE, an expert in health inequalities and mental health. In June 2024, the network marked Windrush Day, the 76th anniversary by sharing colleague stories of relatives who have contributed so positively to our NHS.

In Black History Month we were honoured to display artwork from a talented Nigerian artist, Nduka Omeife. The paintings formed part of the “Black Excellence Series” and aim to celebrate the lives, legacies and achievements of remarkable Black heroes, from innovators in science, technology and art to civil rights activists and cultural icons.

The theme of the month was “reclaiming narratives” and the artwork provided an excellent link to promote discussion and sharing of stories across all our lived experience networks.



Explore Nduka Omeife's artwork



A celebration event was held with colleagues and senior leaders. We were thrilled to be joined by Mr Omeife and Dr Dyer, who were able to discuss and view the artworks in situ, and to share impactful stories of their own. Colleagues also brought a diverse selection of cultural foods for everyone to sample and dressed in their traditional cultural wear. This was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our colleagues and their cultures.



Disability and Neurodiversity Colleague Network

Disability History Month

This event ran from 14th November until 20th December and the theme was Disability, Livelihood and Employment. To celebrate the month, the network held a variety of events including welcoming Dr Christopher Hartworth, Director of Different, a Disabled Peoples Organisation (DPO) which operates through the North East.

Their presentation was about Mary Greaves, a North East disability rights activist who was at the forefront of passing the first disability related legislation in 1973 and one of the architects of the social model of disability. She grew up in Whitley Bay before moving to London to work at the Civil Service and became the leader of a DPO in London.

This session for Disability History Month recognised Mary for her outstanding contribution to disability rights and also examines language and representation of disability and looks at what we can do to make sure services are accessible.

Co-Chairs of our Disability and Neurodiversity Network, Rebecca Kennedy and Jaswant Sodhi delivered a Neurobusters lunch and learn session dispelling myths about neurodivergent individuals and building knowledge about what neurodivergence can look like in the workplace.

Richard, a Team Manager, shared his experiences of joining the NHSBSA with a recent Autism diagnosis. He outlined the support he's been given but also how he feels he has the tools to ensure those in his team have the support they require too. Michael, Head of Financial Strategy, shared his journey of being diagnosed with Crohn's disease. This hasn't stopped him progressing in his career. He shared that he's been able to get where he is today because he has the right support and adjustments in place.

We held a We Care Café to discuss how disability and neurodiversity affects our stress and mental health. We were able to share stories and coping mechanisms and used the opportunity to signpost to internal support structures.

Neurodiversity Celebration Week

In March we celebrated Neurodiversity Celebration Week, a worldwide initiative that challenges stereotypes and misconceptions about neurological differences. During this week, we held an informal Network meeting, giving our members the opportunity to come together and access peer to peer support, advice and signposting.

We welcomed One Fylde, a Blackpool based charity supporting young people and adults with learning difficulties and Autism. They shared how they help people live fulfilling lives by offering opportunities such as community gardening and hosting shows on their own radio station. By adapting their approach for each person and using assistive technology, One Fylde makes it possible for non-verbal individuals to host their own radio shows.

Rachael, one of our network members, shared a blog about her experience with dyslexia and ADHD. She took us through her journey, from diagnosis, to joining the NHSBSA and the difference that made.

Most importantly, she outlined why we should celebrate Neurodiversity in the workplace:

“Celebrating neurodiversity aligns with the NHSBSA's CARE goals, creating a workforce of individuals who are genuinely collaborative, adventurous, reliable, and energetic.”

LGBTQ+ Colleague Network

LGBT History Month took place during February 2025 and was a dedicated time to celebrate the diverse and powerful narratives of LGBTQIA+ individuals. With the theme 'Activism and Social Change', the month encouraged reflection on the contributions of LGBTQ+ activists who have shaped society through both major milestones and everyday acts of courage. The occasion was marked by a variety of activities, including blogs, stories of influential figures, and opportunities for colleagues to engage and learn.

Highlights of the month included a We CARE Café session with UNISON, where we learned insights into UNISON's history and its support for LGBTQ+ communities.

Drew Dalton, founder of ReportOUT and a leading voice in global LGBTQ+ rights, delivered a compelling talk on international activism and queerphobia.

The month concluded with a screening of *Striking with Pride: United at the Coalface* at the Pride Media Centre, celebrating the historic alliance between LGBTQ+ activists and striking miners. The event also supported The Albert Kennedy Trust, a charity for homeless LGBTQ+ youth. These events collectively fostered awareness, solidarity, and a deeper appreciation for the ongoing journey toward equality.

Throughout June 2025, the NHSBSA LGBTQ+ Network proudly celebrated Pride Month under the theme Reflect, Empower, Unite. This theme highlighted the importance of community, progress, and continued advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights. Pride Month served as a reminder of how far LGBTQ+ rights have come, while also acknowledging the work still needed to achieve full equality.

A variety of events took place to engage and educate colleagues. On 12 June, a We CARE Café provided a space for colleagues to share their experiences attending Pride and reflect on the decade since the legalisation of same-sex marriage. On 18 June, a collaborative Pride-themed quiz brought together different networks for a fun and competitive session. The celebrations culminated in an in-person event at Stella House, featuring educational stalls, volunteering opportunities, and a pledge tree for colleagues to show their support as allies or community members. Sweet treats and a charity fundraiser for AKT, supporting homeless LGBTQ+ youth, added to the spirit of the event.



Additionally, our colleagues attended Sparkle weekend in Manchester and Northern Pride in Newcastle on behalf of the NHSBSA. Both were a wonderful opportunity for colleagues to celebrate their authentic selves, while highlighting our fantastic colleague experience for everyone who works here.

It's important we continue to celebrate Pride and people coming together in love and friendship to show how far LGBTQ+ rights have come, and how in some places there's still more work to be done. Pride is also about acceptance, equality, celebrating the work of LGBTQ+ people, education in LGBTQ+ history and raising awareness of issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community - all things we are passionate about at the NHSBSA.

Women's Colleague Network

Women's development is a huge area of interest to our women in the network and the wider organisation. In response to this, the women's network hosted Jane Galloway from the 'Quite the Hive' who delivered three bespoke development training sessions aligned to our members' objectives. The network opened this opportunity to all the lived experience networks, knowing that others were keen to broaden their knowledge and skills in these same areas.

The sessions were:

78 Beating procrastination: 78 attendees

63 Living with your inner critic: 63 attendees

91 Making brave choices: 91 attendees

Sessions were recorded and distributed among the networks for colleagues who were unable to make the sessions. Ongoing work and collaboration between the Colleague Experience and Social Impact team, the Women's Network and Organisational Development and Design means the growth of Women's development in the NHSBSA is and will keep moving from strength to strength.

International Women's Day – for ALL women and girls

The Women's Network hosted an in-person day at Stella House to mark International Women's Day as part of Women's History Month. The theme this year was 'For ALL women and girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment' and the spread of events over that day and over the course of the month allowed our colleagues to come together and celebrate our women.

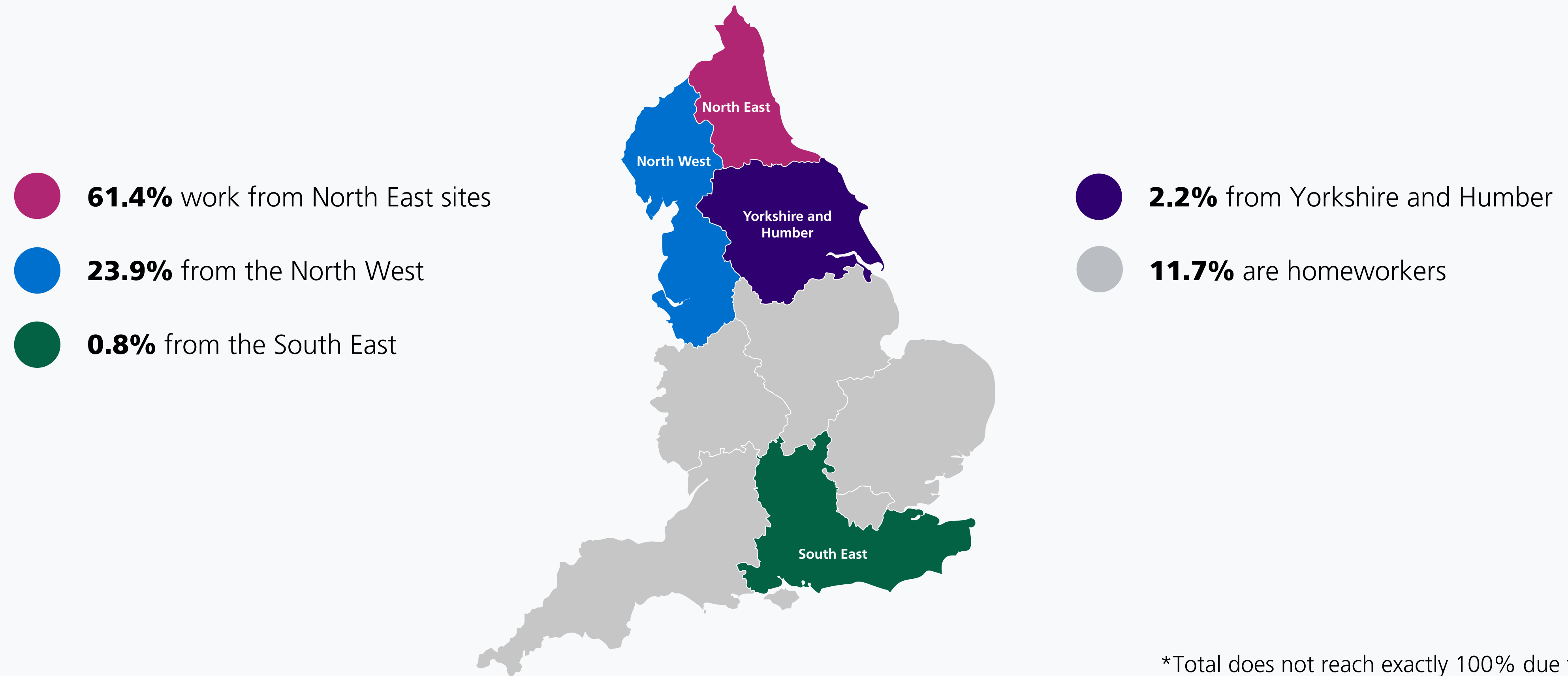
Kayla McCormack delivered a deep dive mindfulness session focussing on empowering people from the inside out. Carys Horn, Talent Acquisition Advisor hosted a session focussing on empowerment and equality in career progression, applications and approach to learning. We were also joined by Kathy Gillatt, non-executive board member for a fireside chat with Women's Network co-chair, Ellen Lynch about her background, support and empowerment from her peers and how her own experiences impacted her approach to parenting. The sessions were facilitated in a hybrid way to ensure maximum attendance and accessibility.

The event also hosted a pre-loved clothes sale to fundraise for our chosen charity, Bloody Good Period. Bloody Good Period fight for menstrual equity and the rights of all women and people who bleed by giving period products to those who can't afford them and provide reproductive health education to those less likely to access it. The clothing was donated by our very own colleagues and a 'pay what you can' approach donating directly to Bloody Good Period, with £85 going to Bloody Good Period to support their effort. The Women's Network continues to grow and make an impact across the organisation.



Our demographics

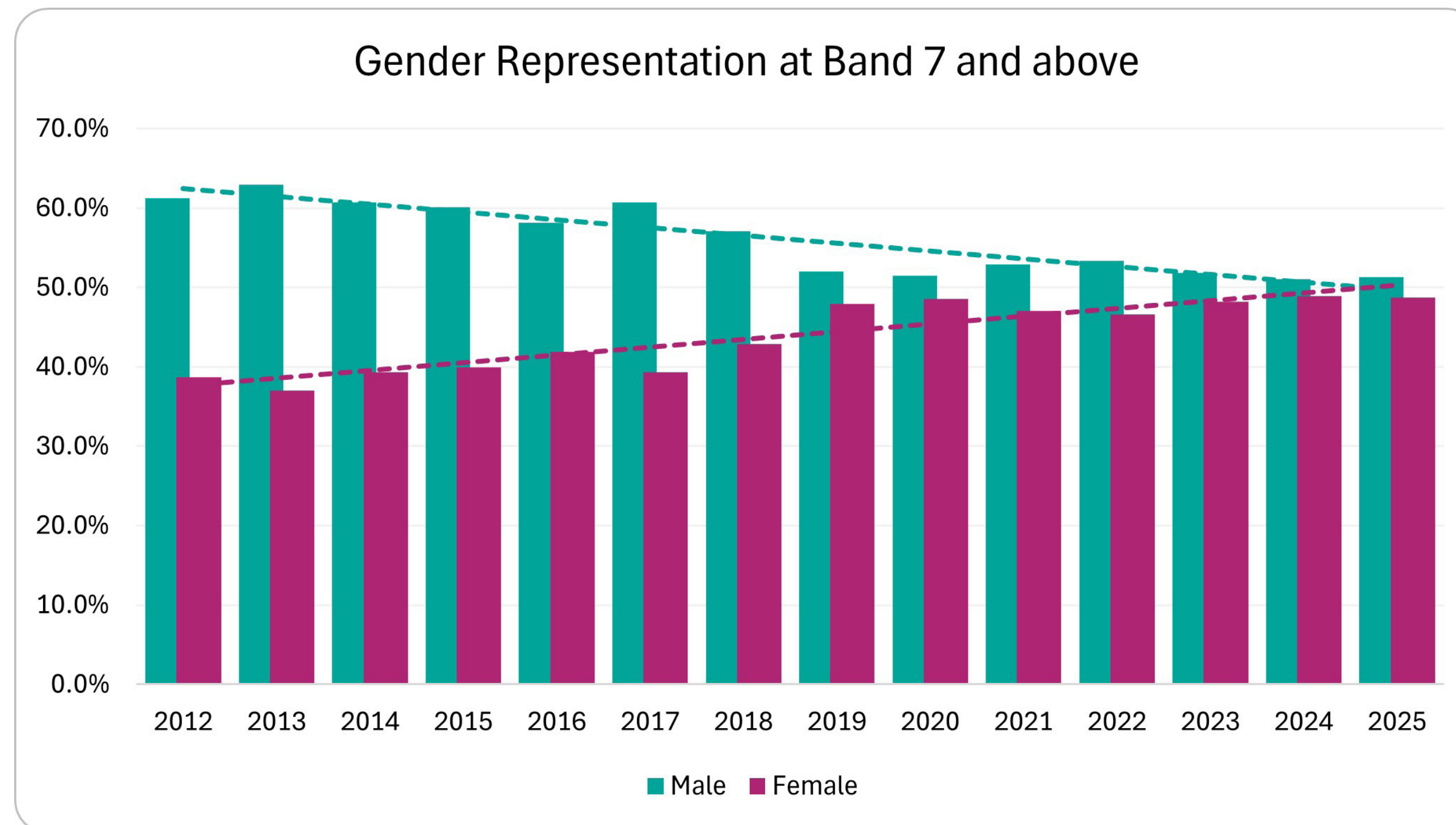
Our workforce headcount as of 31 March 2025 was 5,118, (up 448 from 4,670 in 2024, as 4 people were retrospectively updated on ESR after last year's report was finalised). The workforce is spread over the UK proportionately* as follows:



Gender

The chart below shows gender representation across the workforce, with a focus on bands 7 and above. Key insights include:

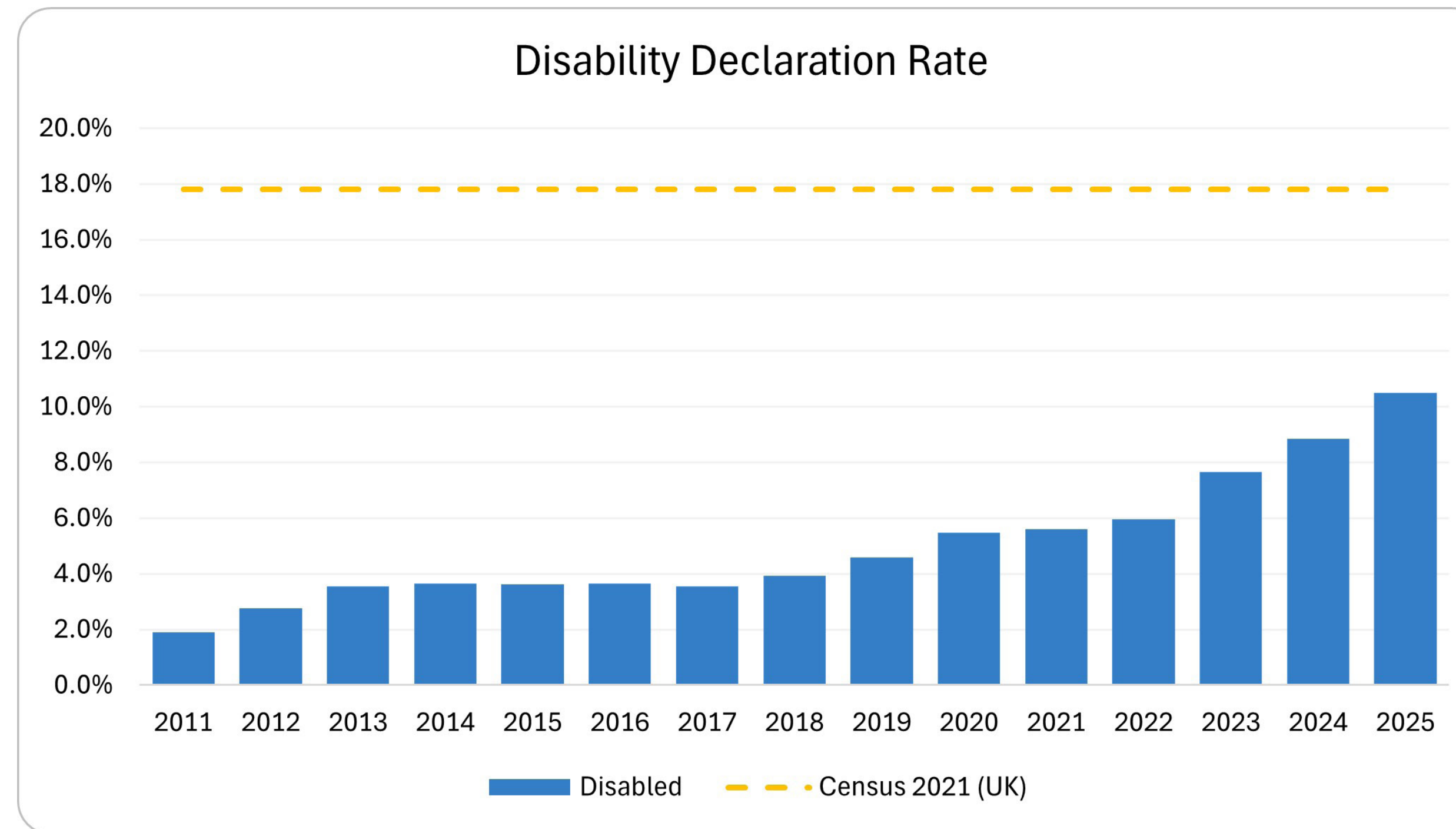
- women account for 61.6% of our workforce, a minor increase of 0.1% on the previous year
- continues to be well above the UK population of 51% women* (Census 2021, GOV.UK)
- gender representation at bands 7 and above remains broadly the same, with an almost equal representation, just below the census comparator



Disability

The chart below shows the disability declaration rate across our workforce. Key insights include:

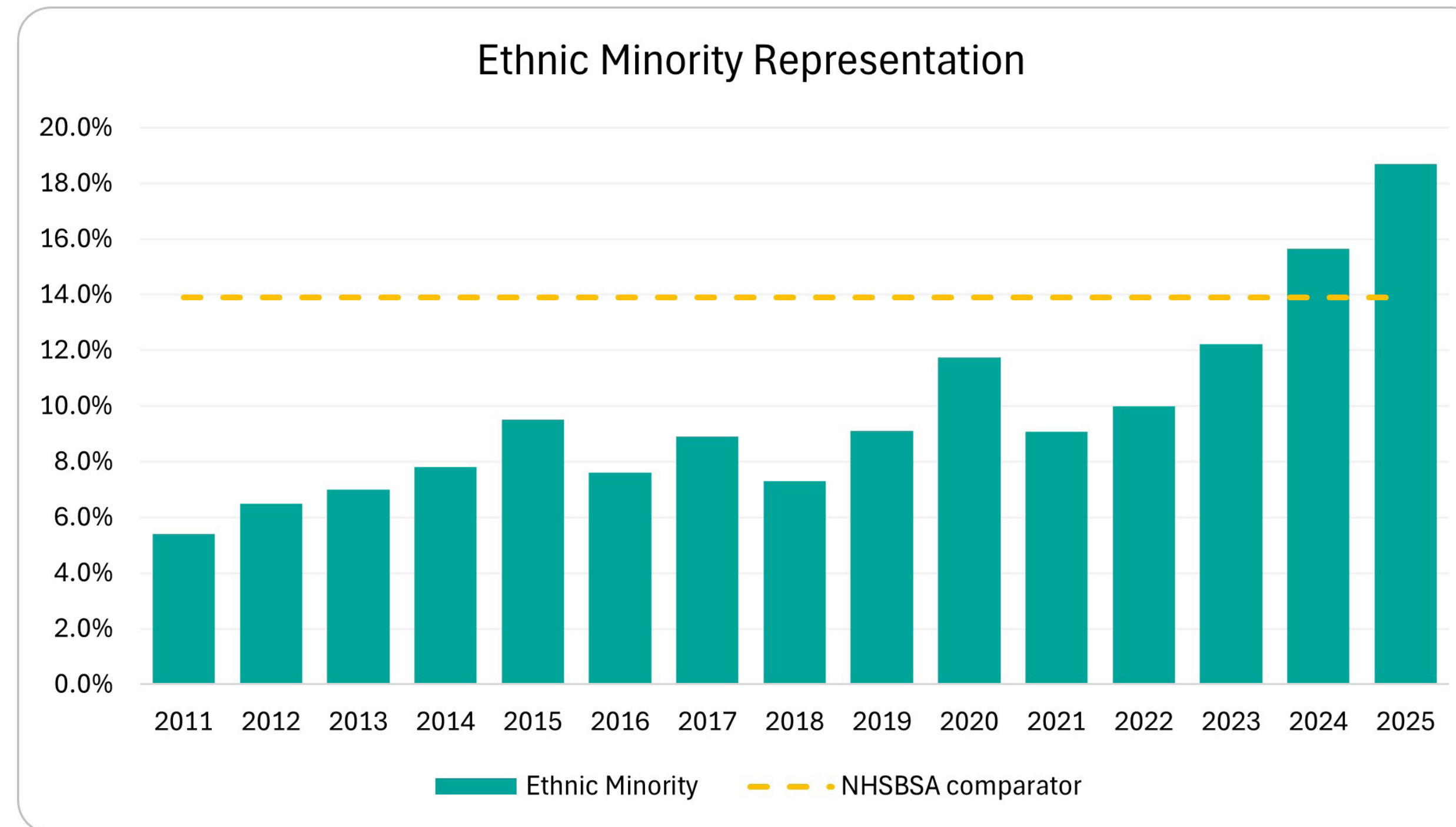
- 10.5% of our workforce have declared that they have a disability, an increase of 1.6% on last year
- increasing trend continues, aiming to be representative of population demographics, which is 17.8% of working age UK adults* (Census 2021, GOV.UK)



Ethnicity

The chart below shows ethnic minority representation across our workforce. Key insights include:

- Ethnic Minority colleagues now account for 18.7% of our workforce
- significant increase of 3.1% from last year and continuing to trend upwards

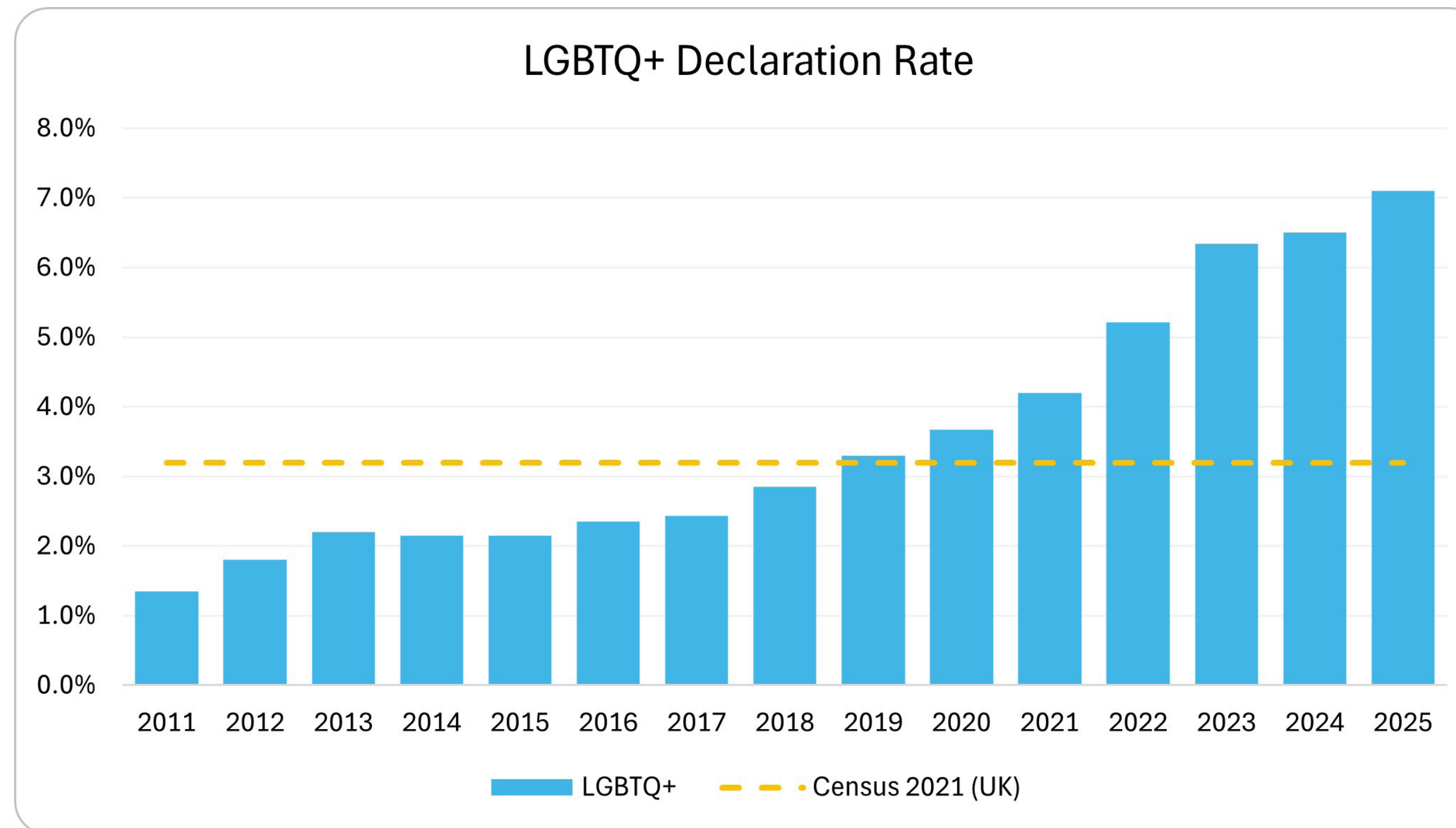


Sexual orientation

The chart below shows the LGBTQ+ declaration rate across our workforce. Key insights include:

- 7.1% of our colleagues have declared that they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or another description of their sexual orientation other than straight/heterosexual
- increase of 0.6% since 2024 and continuing to trend upwards and above the census population data

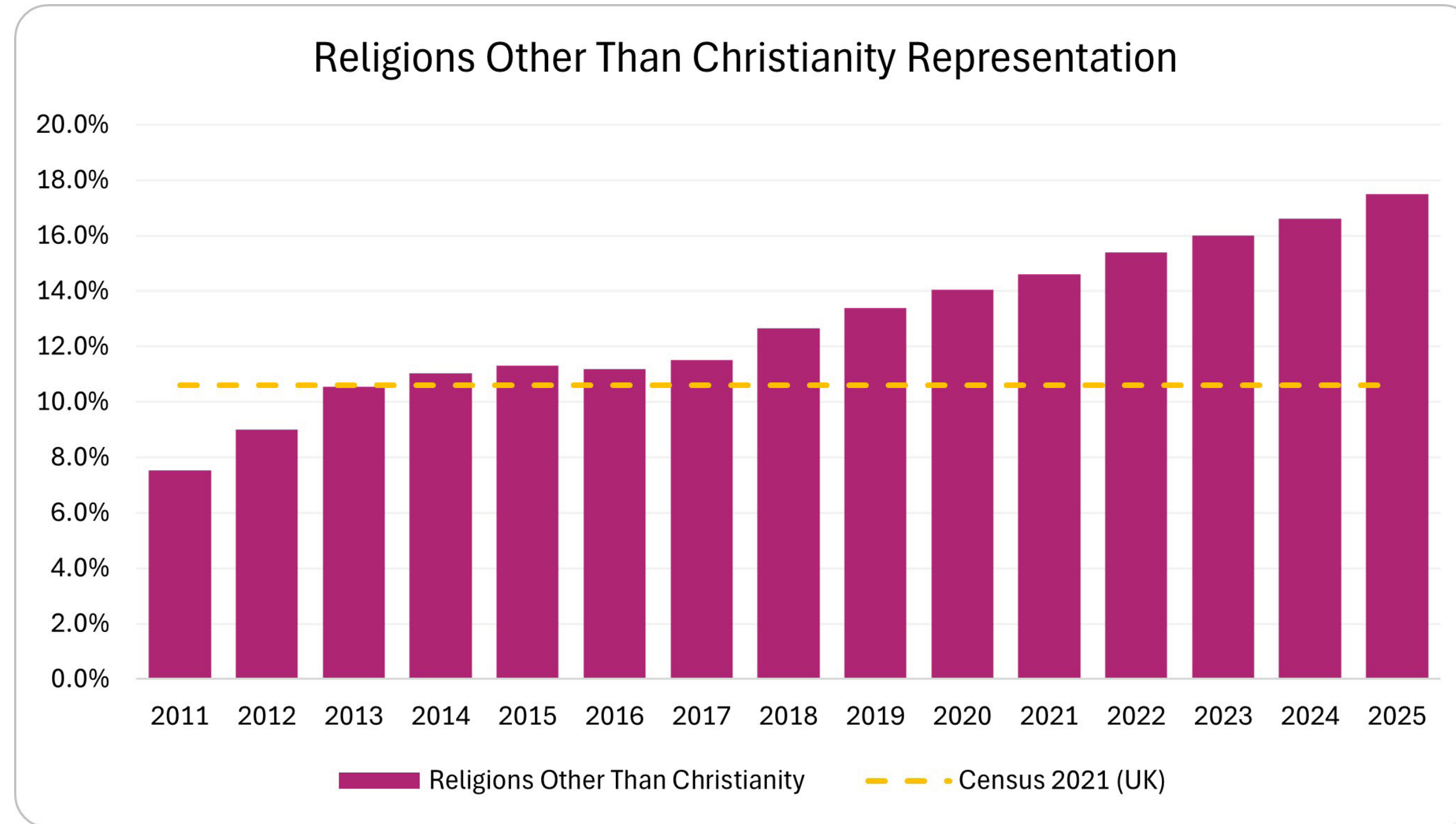
Please note that although 'LGBTQ+' is used in the in the chart below this data does not include trans identity and gender diversity as this is not able to be collected in ESR, however wherever possible we capture this data anonymously in colleague surveys.



Religion

The chart below shows declaration rates of religions other than Christianity. Key insights include:

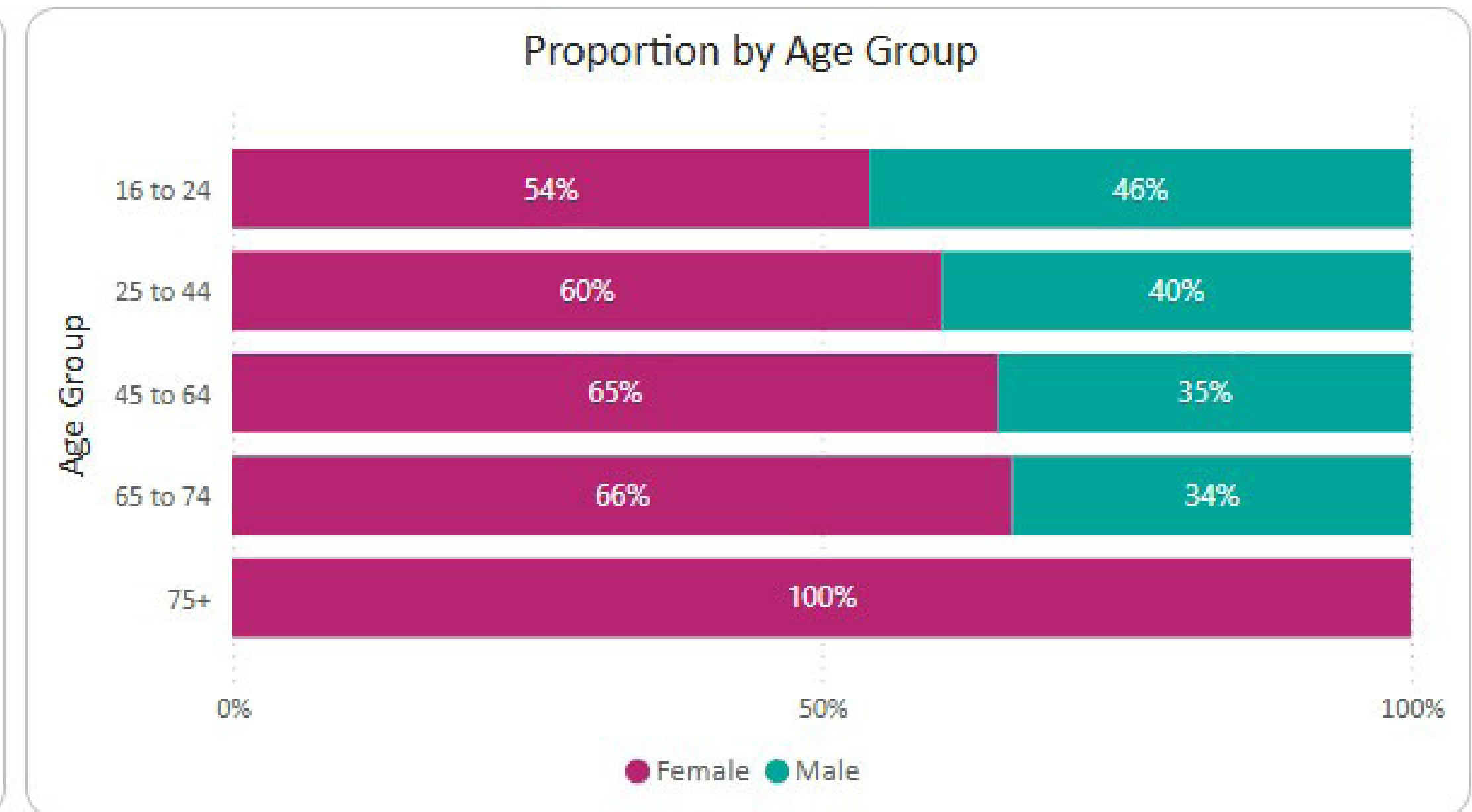
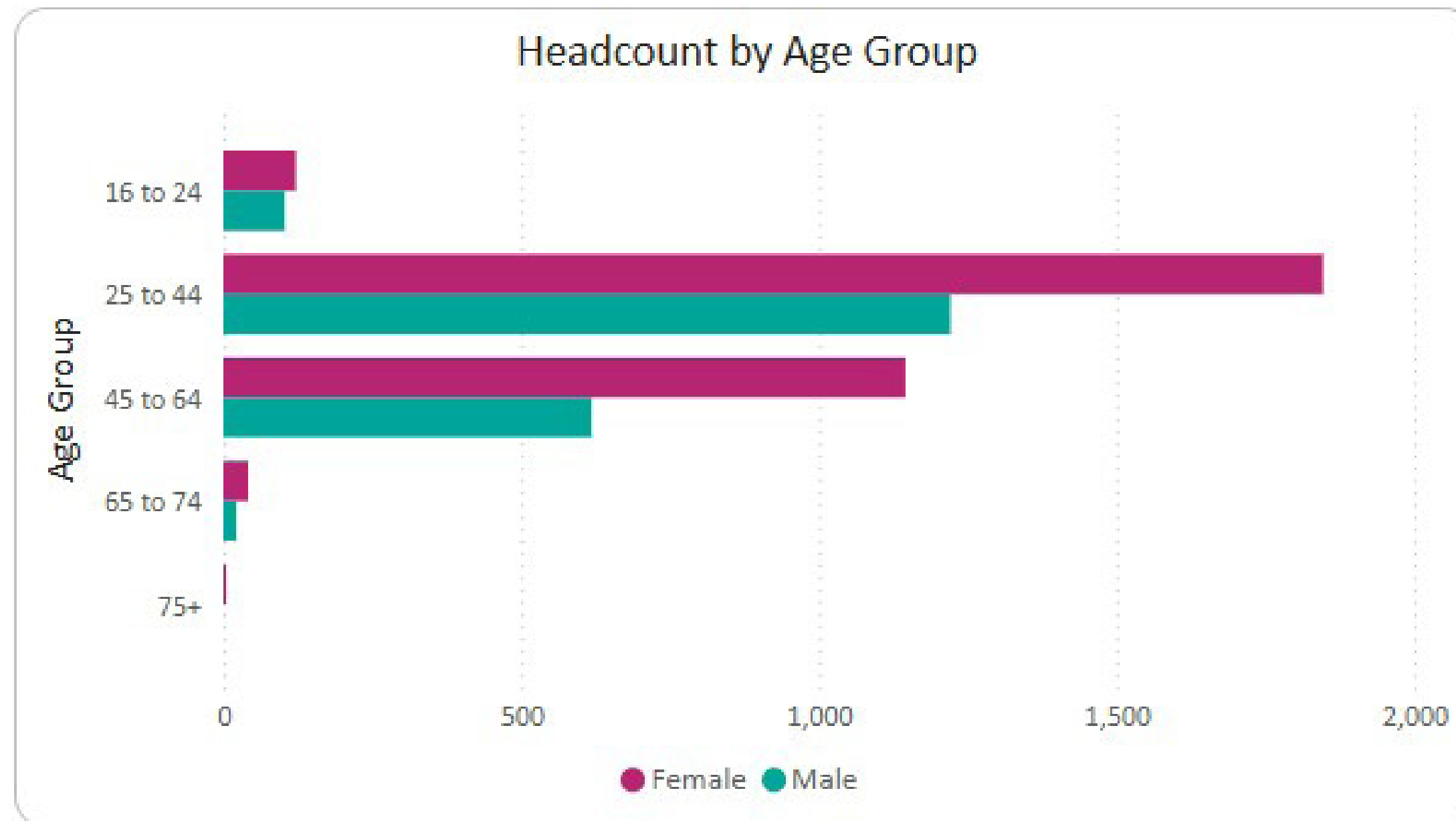
- 40.8% of our workforce are Christian
- 26.5% of colleagues stated they are atheist or of no belief
- 15.3% have not declared their religion
- 17.5% of our colleagues have stated they follow a religion other than Christianity, an increase of 0.9% on 2024. This includes Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism and Sikhism, and others



Age

The charts below show headcount and proportion by age group. Key insights include:

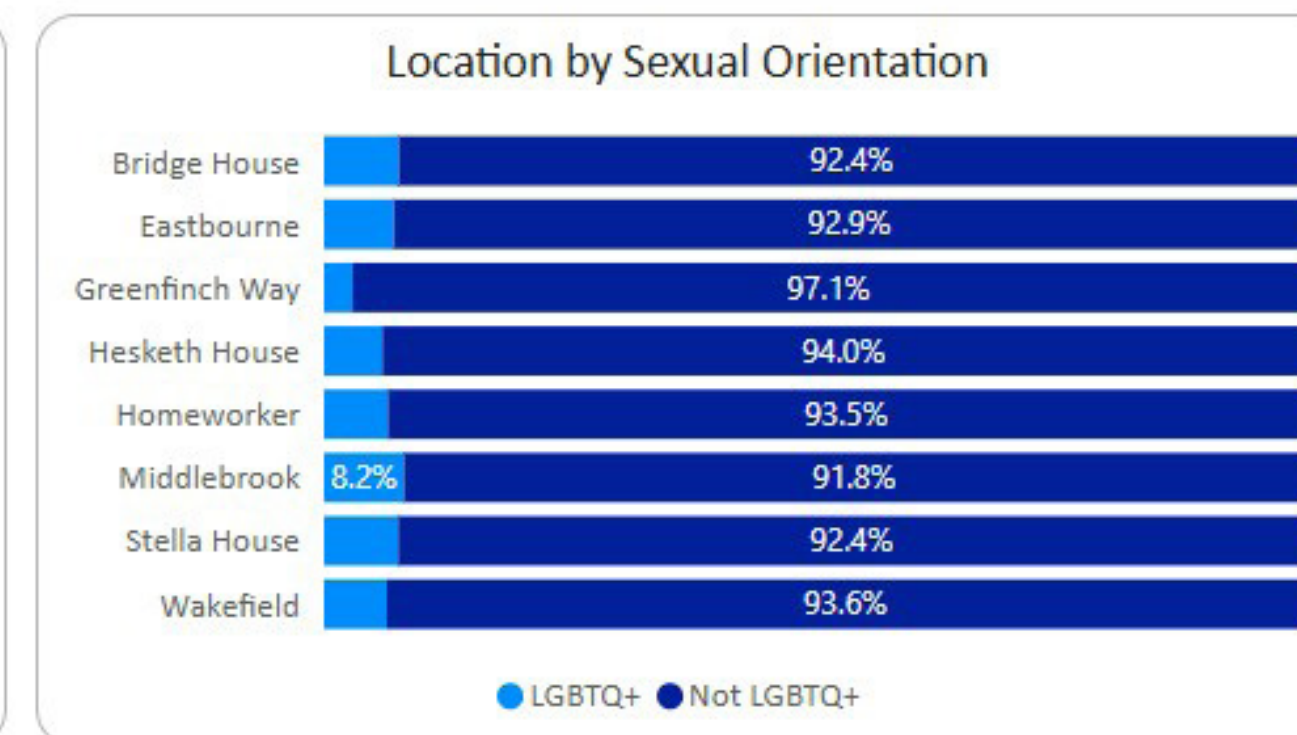
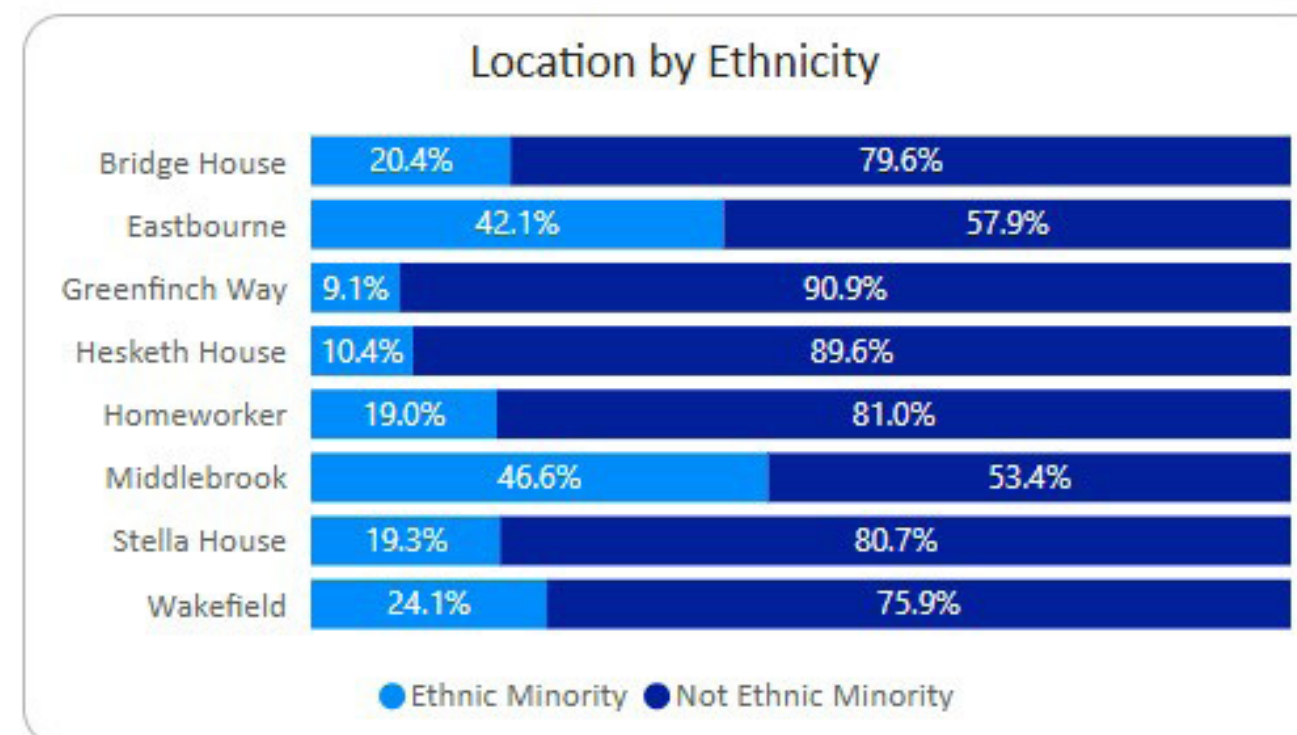
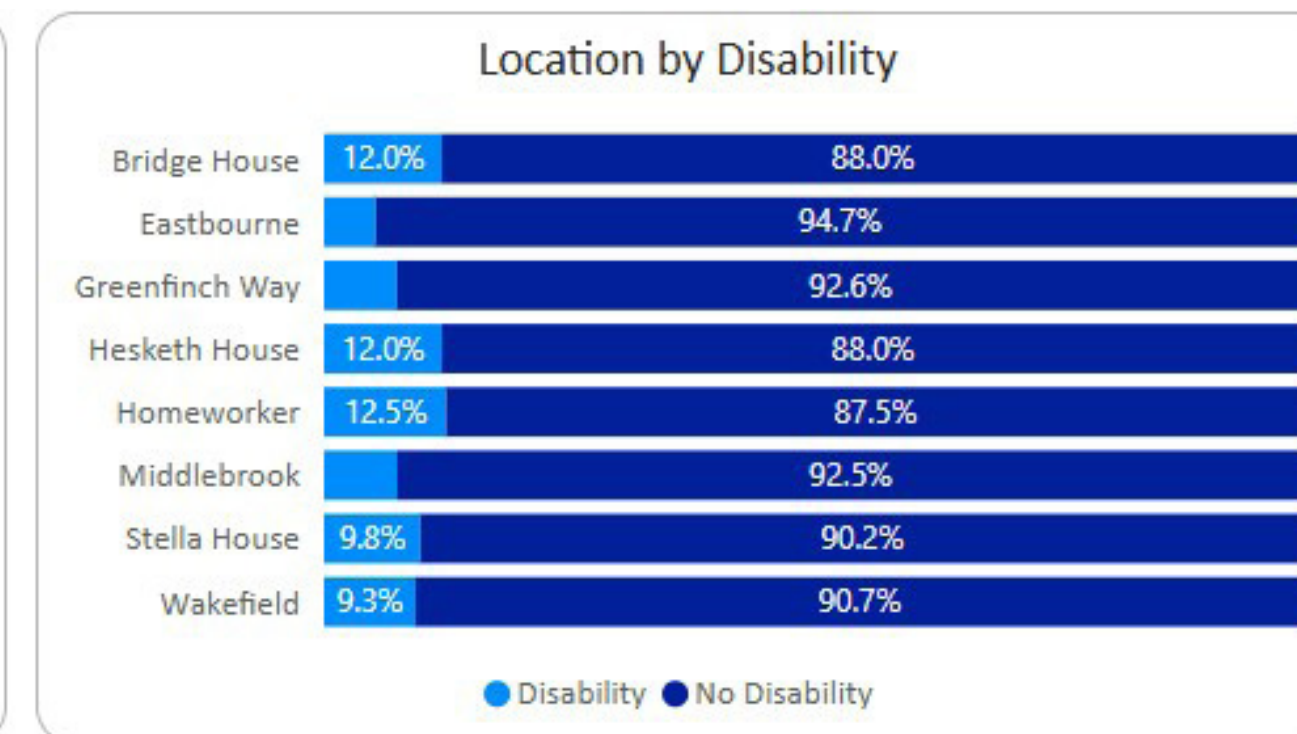
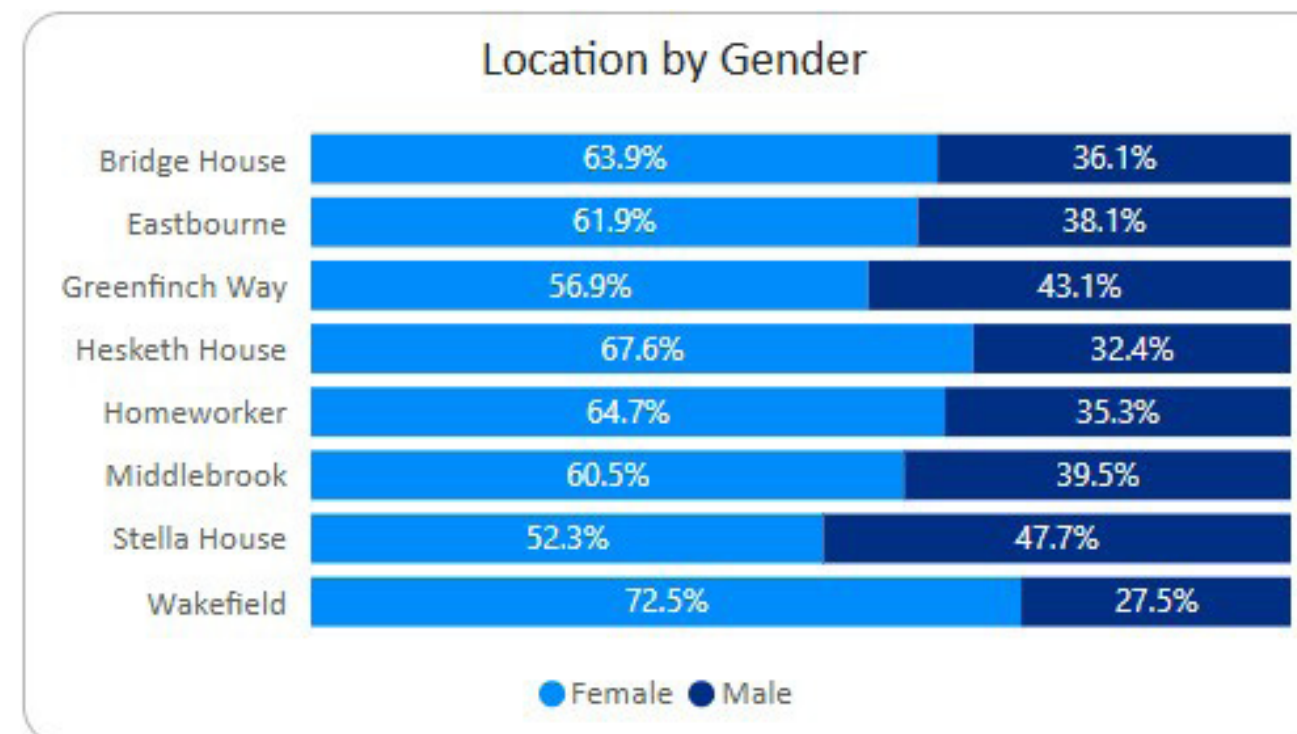
- largest age group is 25-44, which represents 58.5% of our female colleagues and 62.2% of male colleagues
- 45-64 is the next largest age group, making up 36.3% of female colleagues and 31.5% of male colleagues
- proportionately, females make up the largest proportion of the age group in all age groupings



Colleague demographics by location

The charts below show colleague demographics by workplace location and equality group. Key insights include:

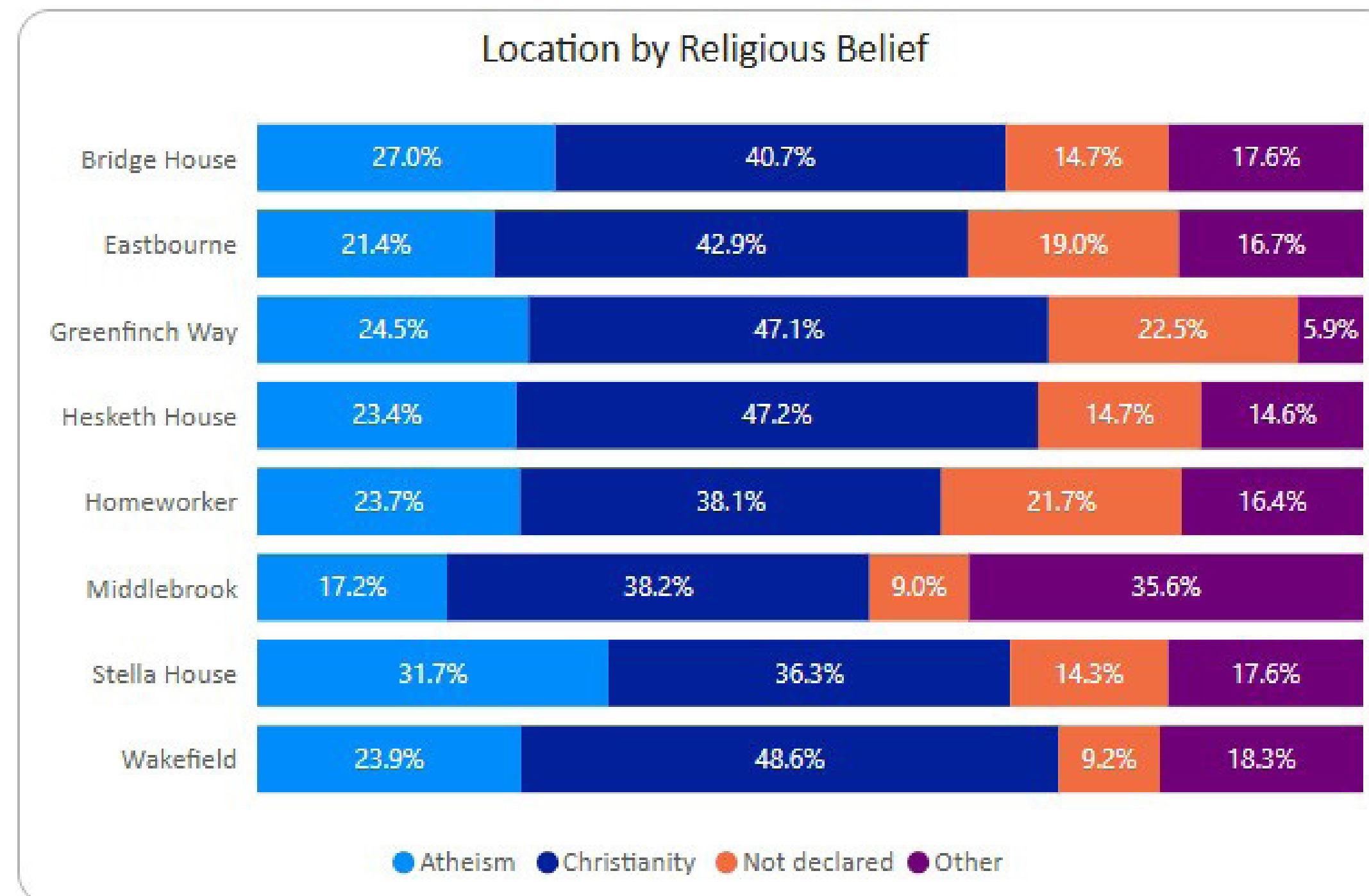
- all workplaces have a majority female population, with Wakefield having the highest female population (72.5%)
- Middlebrook has the highest proportion of colleagues from ethnic minority groups at 46.6%
- home-working colleague group has the highest proportion of disabled colleagues at 12.5%
- Middlebrook has the highest proportion of LGBTQ+ colleagues at 8.2%



Colleague religion and belief by location

The chart below shows colleague religion and belief by location. Key insights include:

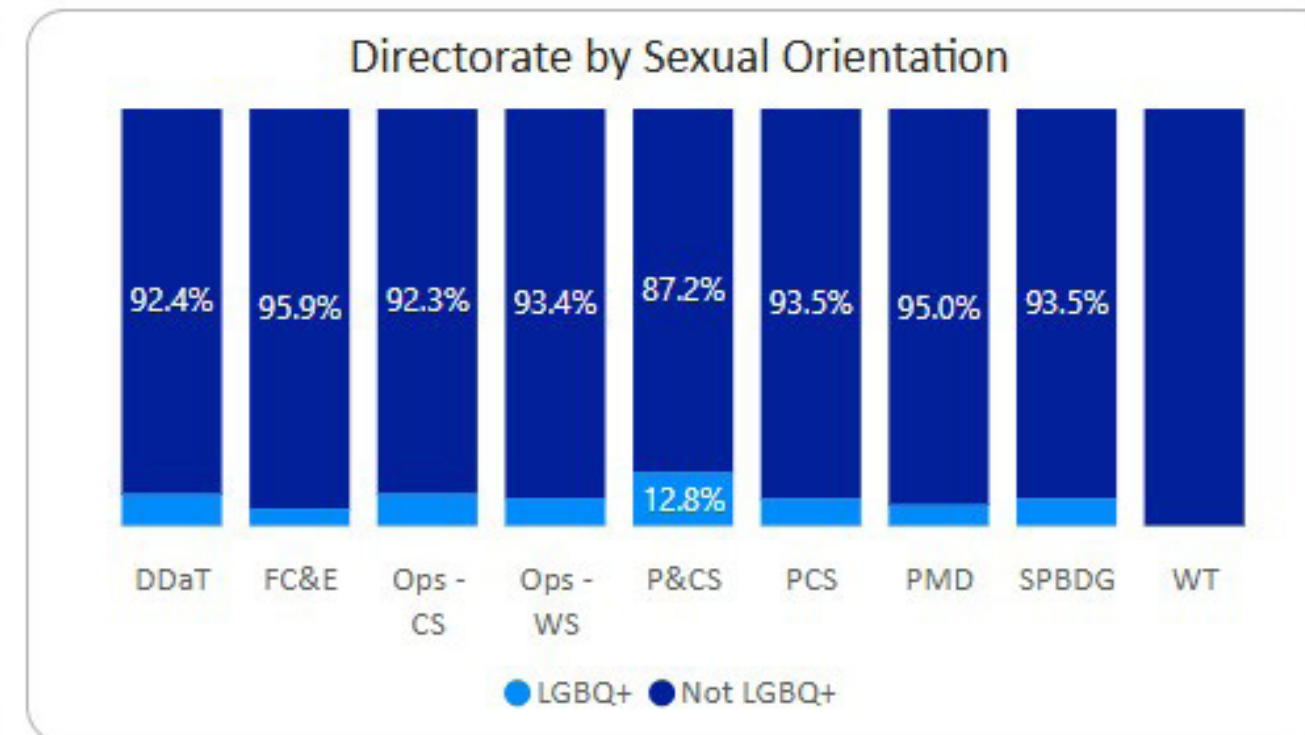
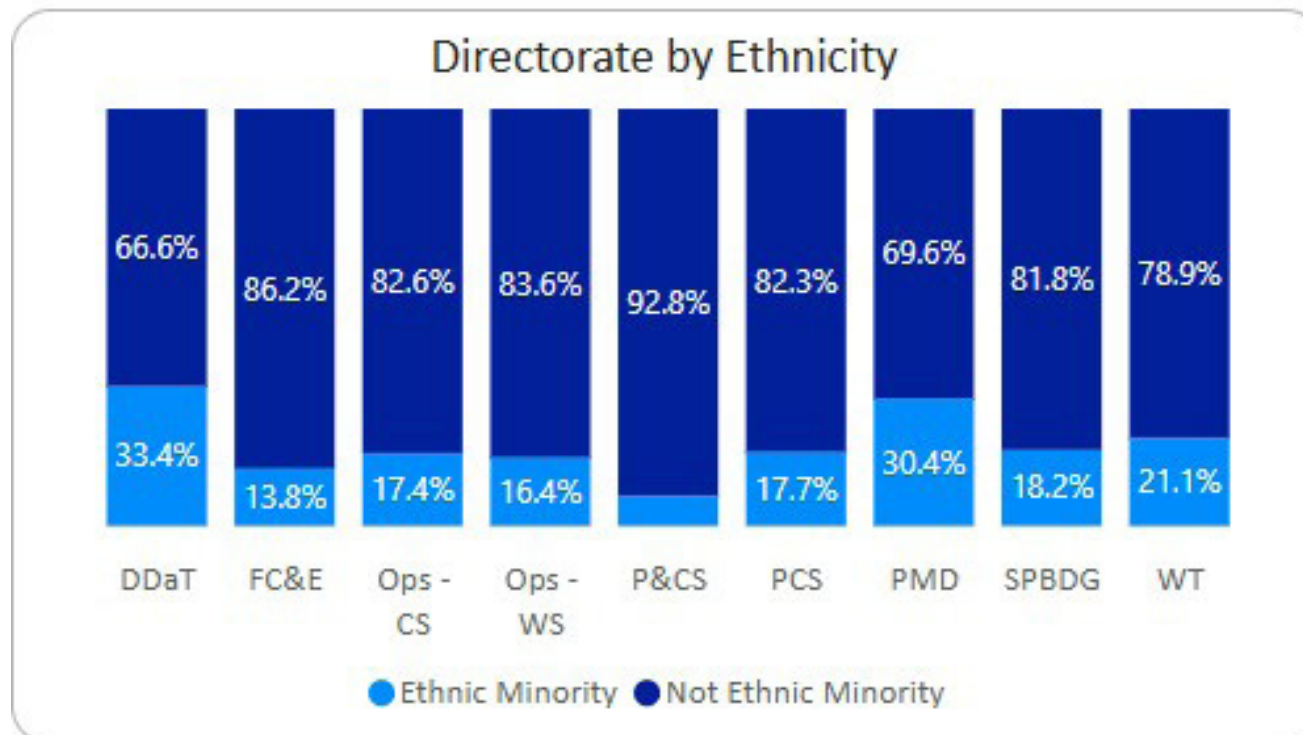
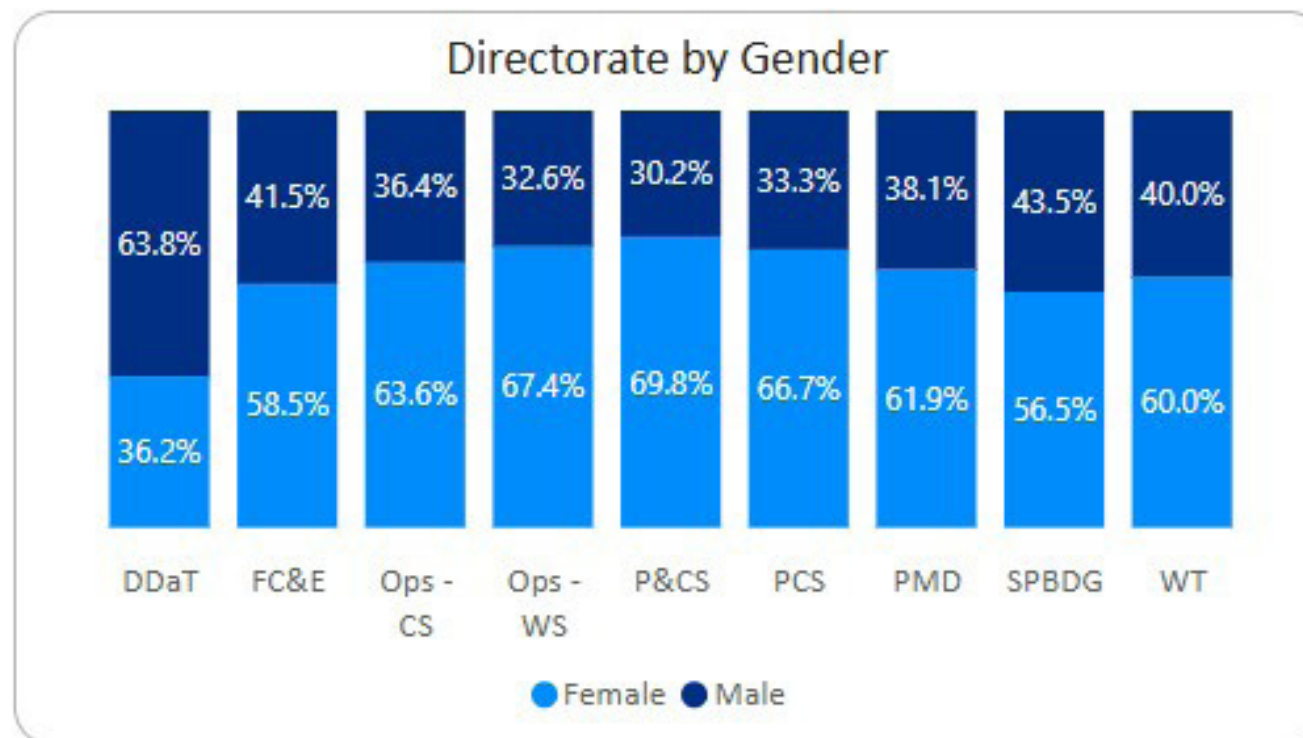
- Middlebrook continues to have the highest proportion of colleagues following 'other' religions (35.6%)
- Wakefield location has the highest proportion of Christian colleagues (48.6%)



Colleague demographics by directorate

The charts below show colleague demographics by directorate and equality group. Key insights include:

- all directorates have a majority female population except for DDaT which is 63.8% male
- DDaT is our most ethnically diverse directorate with 33.4% of colleagues being from a minority ethnic background
- Workforce Transformation has replaced Strategy as the service area with the highest proportion of colleagues with disabilities at 15.0%
- People and Corporate Services remains the directorate with the highest proportion of LGBTQ+ colleagues at 12.8%



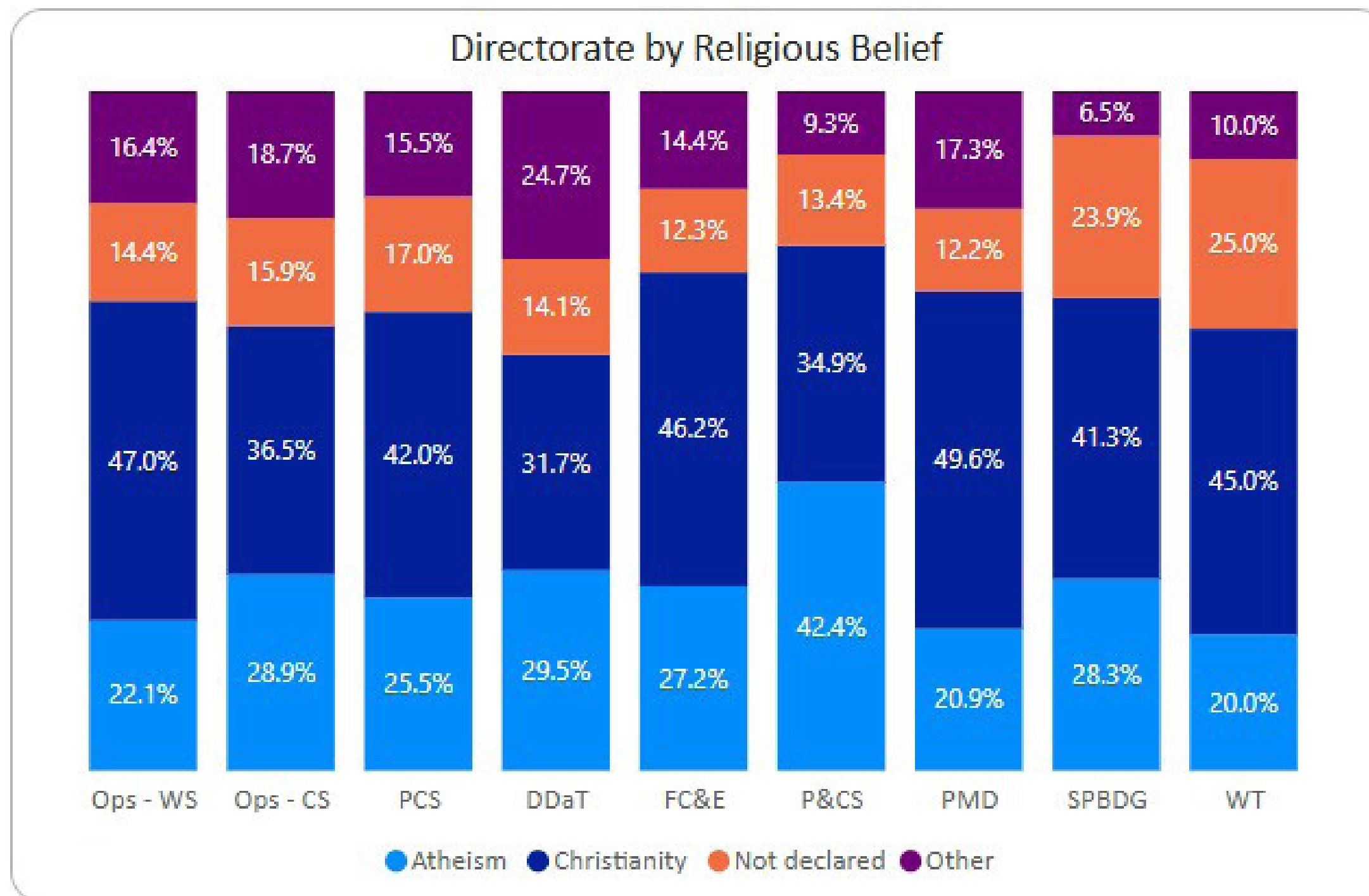
Directorate Key

Initials	Directorate
DDaT	Digital, Data and Technology
FC&E	Finance, Commercial and Estates
Ops - CS	Operations - Citizen Services
Ops - WS	Operations - Workforce Services
P&CS	People and Corporate Services
PCS	Primary Care Services
PMD	Portfolio Management
SPBDG	Strategy, Performance, Business Development and Growth
WT	Workforce Transformation

Colleague religion and belief by directorate

The chart below show colleague demographics by directorate and equality group. Key insights include:

- Christianity is the predominant religious belief in all our areas, except People and Corporate Services, where it is Atheism



Directorate Key

Initials	Directorate
DDaT	Digital, Data and Technology
FC&E	Finance, Commercial and Estates
Ops - CS	Operations - Citizen Services
Ops - WS	Operations - Workforce Services
P&CS	People and Corporate Services
PCS	Primary Care Services
PMD	Portfolio Management
SPBDG	Strategy, Performance, Business Development and Growth
WT	Workforce Transformation

Pay band analysis

Equality groups

The chart below shows the percentage of all colleagues in each pay band and equality group by band, as a percentage of the workforce as a whole.

The small number of colleagues on Non-Agenda for Change (Non-AFC) pay bands have been grouped together, this includes civil service pay bands and other colleagues who have transferred into the NHSBSA, retaining their previous salary scales.

Pay band	Headcount	Female	Male	Ethnic minority	Disabled	LGBTQ+
Pay band 2	4.3%	4.0%	4.7%	3.4%	5.6%	3.6%
Pay band 3	41.9%	46.1%	35.2%	48.2%	47.7%	44.9%
Pay band 4	13.9%	15.5%	11.4%	11.8%	13.3%	16.3%
Pay band 5	10.2%	9.6%	11.1%	7.6%	9.7%	10.8%
Pay band 6	8.2%	7.5%	9.3%	11.7%	9.7%	8.3%
Pay band 7	10.3%	8.1%	13.9%	11.7%	9.7%	10.5%
Pay band 8A	4.5%	4.0%	5.4%	4.1%	3.7%	2.2%
Pay band 8B	2.7%	2.0%	3.9%	1.3%	2.2%	2.2%
Pay band 8C	1.2%	0.9%	1.7%	0.5%	0.8%	0.8%
Pay band 8D	0.7%	0.4%	1.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%
Pay band 9	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.4%	0.0%
Pay band 8+ total	9.2%	7.4%	12.3%	6.1%	7.3%	5.5%
Non Agenda for Change (Non AFC)	2.0%	1.9%	2.1%	0.5%	1.1%	0.0%

Pay band analysis – religion and belief

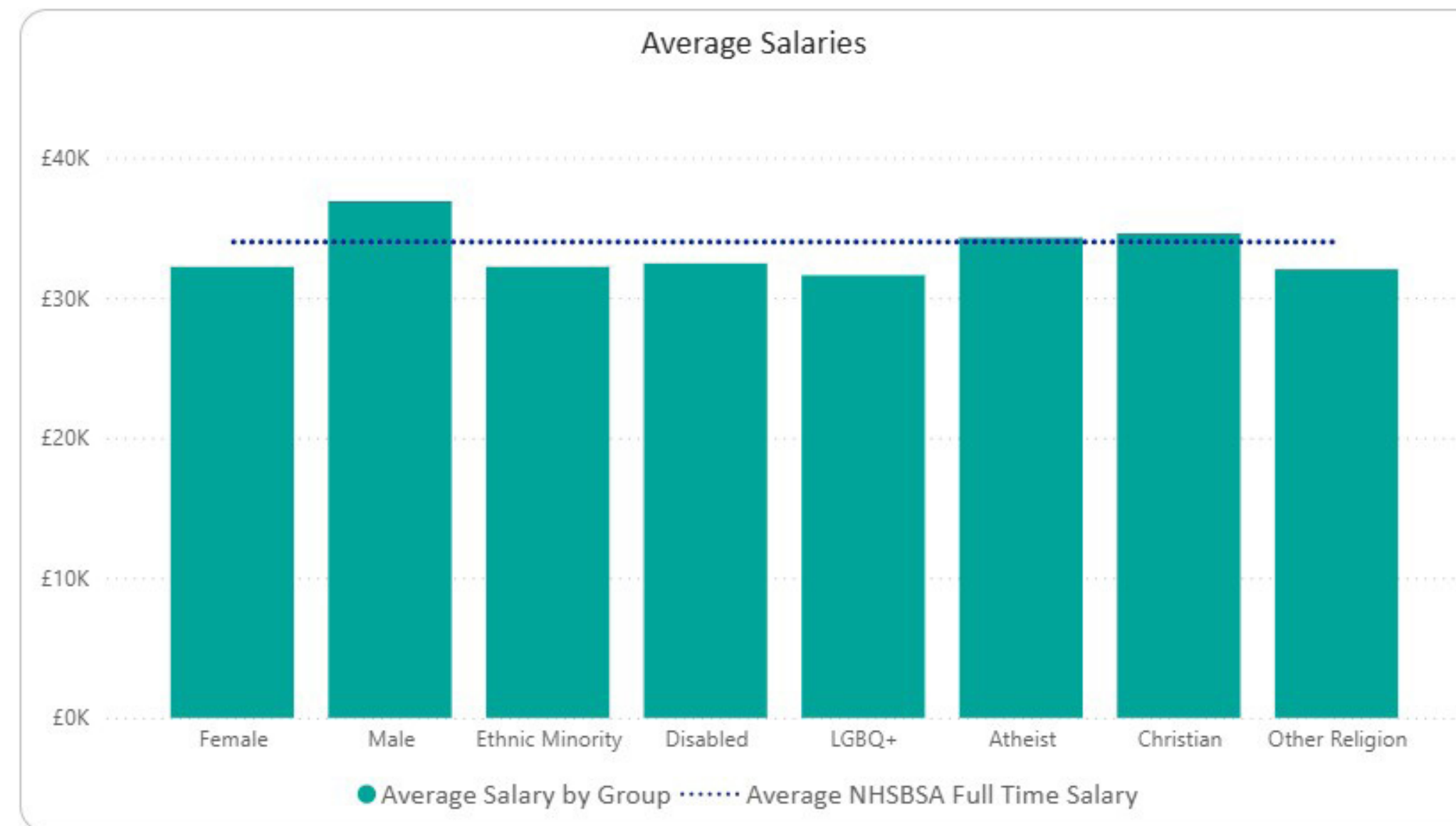
The chart below shows the percentage of all colleagues in each pay band against a comparison of the percentage of colleagues in each pay band by religion and belief.

Pay band	Headcount	Christianity	Atheism	Other	Not disclosed
Pay band 2	4.3%	3.9%	4.0%	4.0%	6.0%
Pay band 3	41.9%	43.5%	36.6%	46.5%	41.5%
Pay band 4	13.9%	13.2%	15.6%	14.5%	12.4%
Pay band 5	10.2%	9.9%	11.4%	9.5%	9.5%
Pay band 6	8.2%	7.0%	10.1%	8.8%	7.4%
Pay band 7	10.3%	9.8%	12.6%	9.1%	9.3%
Pay band 8A	4.5%	4.7%	4.6%	4.3%	4.2%
Pay band 8B	2.7%	3.1%	3.2%	1.5%	2.6%
Pay band 8C	1.2%	1.6%	0.7%	0.9%	1.2%
Pay band 8D	0.7%	0.7%	0.8%	0.2%	1.0%
Pay band 9	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.3%
Pay band 8+	9.2%	10.3%	9.4%	6.9%	9.3%
Non Agenda for Change (Non AFC)	2.0%	2.5%	0.4%	0.7%	4.7%

Average pay analysis

The chart below shows the average full-time equivalent (FTE) annual salary across our workforce by equality group and religion and belief. Key insights include:

- average FTE salary of all colleagues in the NHSBSA is £33,995, which is an increase of £1,954 from last year
- male colleagues' average salary (£36,881) is £2,886 above the NHSBSA average
- Christian colleagues' average salary (£34,581) is slightly above the average
- average salaries of colleagues who are female, from ethnic minorities backgrounds, who have a disability, who are LGBTQ+, and colleagues following religions or beliefs other than Christianity or Atheism are lower than that of the NHSBSA average salary
- lowest average this year being that of colleagues that are part of the LGBTQ+ community at £31,602



Leavers analysis

The chart below show the demographics of colleagues who left the NHSBSA between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025 compared with the overall workforce. Key insights include:

- 371 colleagues left employment between 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025, a decrease on last year's figures
- common reason for leaving was voluntary resignation, accounting for 71.7% of all leavers, followed by retirement (12.4%) and dismissal (11.3%)
- Male colleagues, those from ethnic minority backgrounds, and LGBTQ+ colleague leavers have a leave rate that slightly outweighs the workforce population
- leavers who were followers of 'other' religions or Christian left at a higher rate than the overall NHSBSA population while Atheists and undisclosed were lower than the represented population

	Female	Male	Ethnic minorities	Disabled	LGBTQ+
Overall NHSBSA	61.6%	38.4%	18.7%	10.5%	7.1%
Leavers	58.8%	41.2%	29.6%	10.0%	7.3%

	Atheist	Christian	Other	Not disclosed
Overall NHSBSA	26.5%	40.8%	17.5%	15.3%
Leavers	23.2%	43.1%	20.2%	13.5%

Recruitment analysis

Equality groups

The chart below shows the demographics of applicants, shortlisted candidates, and appointed colleagues between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, compared with last year and the overall workforce. Key insights include:

- 1,579 colleagues started new roles with the NHSBSA
- 32,142 applications were received for the vacancies, with a total of 4,862 (15.1%) of those applications shortlisted for interview, and 1432 offered a start date for the position
- application rates from ethnic minority candidates continues to be strong and have increased, shortlisted and appointed rates have both significantly increased this year by 5.8% and 4.5% respectively
- applications from LGBTQ+ candidates have increased this year which is positive to see after a small decrease last year, however shortlisting and appointment rates have decreased slightly, which will be monitored going forward
- disability representation from application through to appointment has increased which is really positive, supporting the advancement of our aspiration to be fully representative

	Female		Male		Ethnic minorities		Disabled		LGBTQ+	
	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25
Overall NHSBSA	61.5%	61.6%	38.5%	38.4%	15.6%	18.7%	7.7%	10.4%	6.5%	7.1%
Applied	49.6%	47.2%	49.7%	52.0%	63.3%	70.4%	6.0%	6.3%	5.0%	4.8%
Shortlisted	58.0%	57.5%	41.1%	41.5%	37.6%	43.4%	9.2%	9.4%	7.4%	6.9%
Appointed*	61.9%	61.7%	37.3%	37.5%	26.9%	31.4%	7.9%	9.1%	9.5%	8.0%

*Proportion of applicants that were offered a role

Religion and belief

The chart below compares the percentage rates of applicants, those shortlisted and recruited by religion and belief, and with the overall NHSBSA population.

	Atheist		Christian		Other		Not disclosed	
	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25
Overall NHSBSA	26.7%	26.4%	39.5%	40.8%	16.9%	17.5%	16.7%	15.3%
Applied	14.1%	11.4%	45.7%	48.5%	31.7%	32.3%	8.6%	7.9%
Shortlisted	24.7%	21.0%	41.4%	46.5%	23.2%	22.0%	10.7%	10.5%
Appointed*	31.3%	25.8%	37.7%	43.3%	20.0%	18.8%	11.1%	12.1%

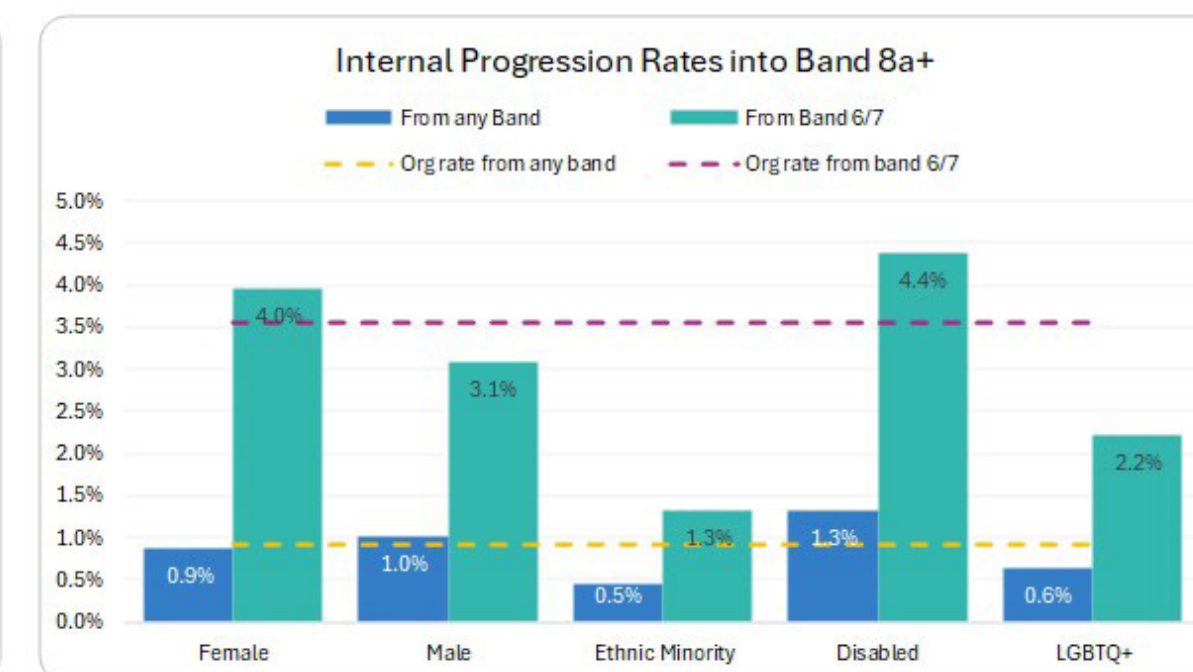
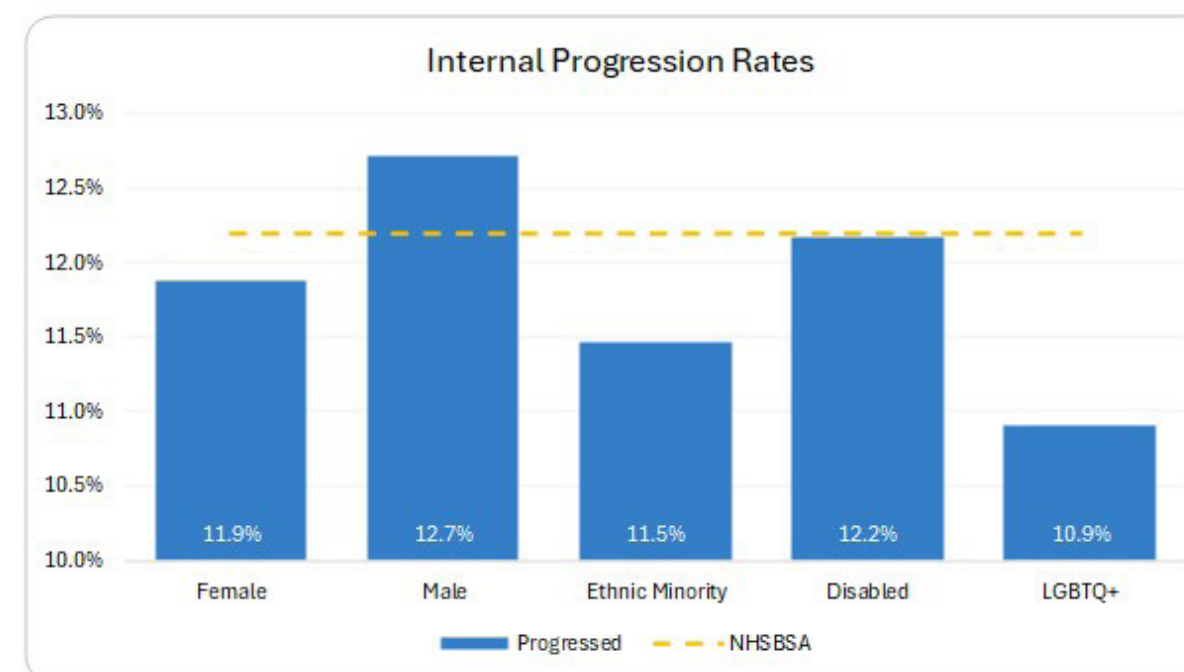
*Proportion of applicants offered a role

Internal progression

The charts below shows internal progression within the NHSBSA over the past 12 months (to March 2025), highlighting colleagues who have moved up by at least one band, remained in the same band, or moved down. Key insights include:

- internal progression rates for men (12.7%) and disabled colleagues (12.2%) are at or above the organisation average (12.2%)
- LGBTQ+ colleagues are 1.3% lower than the organisation average
- women and ethnic minority colleagues just below the average at 11.9% and 11.5% retrospectively
- progression into leadership roles analysis shows that women and colleagues with a disability have a higher rate of progression from band 6 or 7 into an 8a+ role in the reporting period
- ethnic minority and LGBTQ+ colleagues have a lower rate of progress into 8a+ roles. These are priority areas for the organisation and will be closely monitored this year to measure the impact of programmes of work underway on internal progression, and to identify any other action that can be taken by the organisation to further improve progression

All Internal Progression				Internal Progression into Band 8a+		
Colleague group	Progressed	Stayed the same	Moved back	Colleague group	From any Band	From Band 6/7
NHSBSA	12.2%	87.3%	0.5%	NHSBSA	0.9%	3.6%
Female	11.9%	87.5%	0.6%	Female	0.9%	4.0%
Male	12.7%	86.8%	0.5%	Male	1.0%	3.1%
Ethnic Minority	11.5%	88.3%	0.3%	Ethnic Minority	0.5%	1.3%
Disabled	12.2%	87.0%	0.8%	Disabled	1.3%	4.4%
LGBTQ+	10.9%	87.3%	1.8%	LGBTQ+	0.6%	2.2%



Employee relations cases

The chart below shows the number of formal disciplinary, grievance, bullying and harassment, and performance management cases recorded on ESR over the past year, broken down by equality groups and religion or belief. Key insights include:

- slight increase in the number of male colleagues subject to formal disciplinary procedures compared with previous year's reporting
- small increase in the number of bullying and harassment cases reported by female colleagues
- recent initiatives, including changes in legislation, around awareness and reporting routes may have empowered colleagues to come forward through formal channels, contributing to a more transparent and supportive workplace culture

	Female	Male	Ethnic minority	Disabled	LGBTQ+
Disciplinary	7	22	<5	7	<5
Grievance	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Bullying and harassment	15	<5	<5	<5	<5
Performance management	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5

	Christianity	Atheism	Other	Not disclosed
Disciplinary	11	9	<5	6
Grievance	<5	<5	<5	<5
Bullying and harassment	11	<5	<5	<5
Performance management	<5	<5	<5	<5

Themes relating to employee relations cases are monitored closely through various channels, including the Corporate HR team, the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian and the lived experience colleague networks.

Our focus

Our aim is that the NHSBSA is a truly inclusive organisation and the best place any of our colleagues have worked.

It's important that our culture reflects that aspiration and values the diversity of our colleagues. We aim to be representative of the communities in which we live, work and serve, where all our colleagues feel able to be themselves at work, achieve their aspirations and have a voice.

Our colleague networks represent the voice of our colleagues from those lived experience groups and support with our programmes of work, which in turn helps to shape our people practices.

All our colleagues are important to us. The focus of our diversity, inclusion and social mobility work in the NHSBSA is on five main characteristics, as colleagues with those characteristics either are underrepresented overall, or in leadership communities in the NHSBSA workforce. They experience additional barriers to accessing development, progression and support and for those reasons we retain a focus on those groups.

These groups are:

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues (BAME)
- Disability and neurodivergent colleagues
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, queer, questioning + (LGBTQ+) which also includes gender identity
- Women
- Socio-economic background

The focus on those groups is important to us as having a diverse, inclusive and highly engaged workforce which is representative at all levels leads to better decision making, creativity and innovation, and is fundamental to the success of our organisation.



Over the past year, the Colleague Experience and Social Impact team, Wellbeing and Inclusion Committee and Colleague Networks have worked on key objectives in relation to these five groups, including designing and testing new interventions to reduce barriers and to change outcomes. This work has created engagement and connection amongst colleagues, raised awareness and understanding, provided development, promoted the NHSBSA externally as an employer of choice and as an inclusive service provider.



Above all, our work has provided an inclusive work culture and environment where colleagues who identify with these groups can thrive.

The following pages highlight the work that has been achieved over the past year in these areas and identify key objectives for the year ahead.

It is only by keeping the focus on these issues, creating and testing new interventions and taking bold action, will we become a truly diverse and inclusive organisation.



Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues (BAME)

Our objectives for 2024-25 were to:

- increase representation of colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds across the organisation and in leadership roles
- reduce the gap between shortlisting and appointment for candidates from ethnic minority backgrounds
- increase leadership capability and colleague understanding of issues pertaining to race and ethnicity
- provide further leadership development for colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds to enable colleagues to maximise their potential and progress in their careers, impacting on the rates of progression through the organisation
- ensure the NHSBSA retains our diverse talent through development, opportunities and support with career goals and pathways

Our outcomes for 2024-25 were:

- Ethnic minority representation in the NHSBSA increased to 18.7%, which continues the upward trend, above our aim of 14%, a comparator based on the geographical location of our workforce and regional differences
- application, shortlisting and appointment rates for ethnic minority candidates continue to increase
- Let's talk about race forms part of Manager Essentials training to ensure learning is embedded in our approach
- the fourth cohort of our bespoke Reciprocal Mentoring for Inclusion Programme which included partnerships focused on race is underway, and aims to increase leadership capability and understanding of lived experiences, and to provide development for colleagues
- three cohorts of our BAME Leadership Development Programme have concluded with excellent outcomes, review and evaluation are underway

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues (BAME)

Our objectives for 2025-26 are to:

- maintain representation of colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds across the organisation and increase representation in leadership roles
- increase leadership capability and colleague understanding of issues pertaining to race and ethnicity
- provide further leadership development for colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds to enable colleagues to maximise their potential and progress in their careers, impacting on the rates of progression through the organisation
- ensure the NHSBSA retains our diverse talent through development, opportunities and support with career goals and pathways

Our planned actions for 2025-26 are to:

- continue with our inclusive recruitment work, including embedding diverse recruitment panels and piloting of new interventions
- review our recruitment and progression data and feed this into our project work to ensure our work is evidence based and data led
- work with our colleagues to understand their experiences and barriers faced, to enable meaningful change them and other colleagues
- provide opportunities for colleagues through further cohorts of our bespoke Reciprocal Mentoring for Inclusion Programme, evaluating this and celebrating successes of participants
- provide further leadership development opportunities for colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds, evaluating the programme so far, identifying the successes and feedback from first two cohorts

Disability and neurodiversity

Our objectives for 2024-25 were to:

- continue to increase the representation of disabled and neurodiverse colleagues to be representative of the UK working population
- aim to increase representation of disabled and neurodiverse colleagues in leadership roles, and from bands 7 upwards
- increase disability declaration rates to ensure the reliability of our data
- review recruitment data for applicants with disabilities and who are neurodiverse, aiming to increase applicants, and numbers shortlisted and appointed
- improve colleague knowledge and understanding of disability and neurodiversity, including manager capability
- offer talent and leadership development to colleagues with disabilities and who are neurodiverse, to maximise potential and achieve career aspirations
- continue to ensure the voice of our colleagues with disabilities and who are neurodiverse continues to be heard and acted upon

Our outcomes for 2024-25 included:

- our disabled population rose by 1.6% on the previous year and is now 10.5% of our workforce
- applications, shortlisted, and appointed candidates from disabled candidates showed a slight decrease this year
- work on improving knowledge around workplace adjustments for colleagues has taken place with the launch of a new policy and guidance, aiming to ensure managers and colleagues are well equipped and enabled to implement them
- analysis of progression rates shows that colleagues with a disability have a higher rate of progression into an 8+ role from band 6/7
- our Reciprocal Mentoring for Inclusion Programme included partnerships focused on disability and neurodiversity to increase leadership capability and understanding of these lived experiences, and provide development for colleagues
- work on a bespoke Disability and Neurodivergence Leadership Development Programme has taken place, with the programme due to start in September 2025

Disability and neurodiversity

Our objectives for 2025-26 are to:

- increase the representation of disabled and neurodiverse colleagues to be representative of the UK working population
- increase representation of disabled and neurodiverse colleagues in leadership roles, and from bands 7 and above
- increase disability declaration rates to ensure the reliability of our data
- review recruitment data for applicants with disabilities and who are neurodiverse, aiming to increase applicants, and numbers shortlisted and appointed
- improve colleague knowledge and understanding of disability and neurodiversity, including manager capability
- offer talent and leadership development to colleagues with disabilities and who are neurodiverse, to maximise potential and achieve career aspirations
- ensure the voice of our colleagues with disabilities and who are neurodiverse continues to be heard and acted upon

Our planned actions for 2025-26 are to:

- continue with our inclusive recruitment work, reviewing recruitment and colleague data to ensure we are evidence based and data led in our work
- increase applicant numbers and those who are shortlisted and appointed who are neurodiverse or/and disabled
- pilot our first cohort of a Disability and Neurodiversity Leadership Development Programme with colleagues
- increase leadership knowledge through further cohorts of our bespoke Reciprocal Mentoring for Inclusion Programme
- build training awareness for colleagues' managers across the organisation on disability or/and neurodiversity
- work closely with support from our Disability and Neurodiversity Colleague Network to share knowledge and increase understanding across the organisation

LGBTQ+

Our objectives for 2024-25 were to:

- increase the representation of LGBTQ+ colleagues in our organisation to reflect the UK population
- increase representation in leadership roles and from band 7 and above to ensure a representative leadership community
- increase declaration rates to ensure the reliability of our data
- review talent and leadership development for colleagues who are LGBTQ+ to maximise potential and achieve their career aspirations
- ensure the voice of our LGBTQ+ colleagues continues to be heard and acted upon, working with our network colleagues to inform our work

Our outcomes for 2024-25 included:

- representation currently sits at 7.1%, an increase which is also above the census UK population data
- both shortlisting and appointment rates for LGBTQ+ applicants have increased this year
- we have worked closely with the LGBTQ+ colleague network to ensure knowledge and awareness building took place across the organisation
- offered attendance at Pride in Leadership conference to network members to support development
- The launch of our bespoke Reciprocal Mentoring for Inclusion Programme included partnerships focused on LGBTQ+ colleagues to increase leadership capability and understanding of these lived experiences, and provide development for colleagues

LGBTQ+

Our objectives for 2025-26 are to:

- maintain the representation of LGBTQ+ colleagues in our organisation
- increase representation in leadership roles and from band 7 and above to ensure a representative leadership community
- increase declaration rates to ensure the reliability of our data
- review talent and leadership development for colleagues who are LGBTQ+ to maximise potential and achieve their career aspirations
- ensure the voice of our LGBTQ+ colleagues is heard and acted upon, working with our network colleagues to inform our work

Our planned actions for 2025-26 are to:

- continue with our inclusive recruitment work, reviewing recruitment and colleague data to ensure we are evidence and data led in our work
- review and understand our recruitment processes, in particular the LGBTQ+ experience within that
- sharing information across the organisation on the impact of recording monitoring data and encourage declaration
- begin planning for development opportunities for LGBTQ+ colleagues and evaluate these against our organisational requirements
- continue providing training on LGBTQ+ and intersectional experiences for colleagues
- continue increasing leadership knowledge through further cohorts of our bespoke Reciprocal Mentoring for Inclusion Programme

Women

Our objectives for 2024-25 were to:

- increase representation for women in leadership roles at band 8b and above
- offer leadership development to women in the organisation, to maximise talent and achieve career aspirations
- provide spaces for connection and networking to share skills, knowledge and experience
- leadership capability and understanding of women's equality and issues such as menopause
- ensure women's voices are heard and acted upon
- reduce our gender pay gap

Our outcomes for 2024-25 were:

- representation of women in senior roles decreased slightly by 0.2%
- full review of women's development opportunities was undertaken to inform future talent development. A new development offer has been curated and will be shared with network members
- the rate of women applicants who were shortlisted and appointed through our recruitment processes decreased slightly this year
- women continued to be represented in our bespoke Reciprocal Mentoring for Inclusion Programme, partnerships focused on women's experiences to increase leadership capability and understanding of lived experiences, and to provide development for colleagues
- mean gender pay gap decreased this year to 12.5%, while the median increased by 0.1% to 9%

Women

Our objectives for 2025-26 are to:

- further increase representation for women in leadership roles at band 8b and above
- offer talent development to women in the organisation to maximise talent and achieve career aspirations
- provide spaces for connection and networking to share skills, knowledge, and experience
- increase leadership capability and understanding of women's equality, including issues such as menopause
- ensure women's voice are heard and acted upon
- work to reduce our gender pay gap

Our planned actions for 2025-26 are to:

- continue with our inclusive recruitment work, reviewing recruitment and colleague data to ensure we are evidence-based and data-led in our work
- implement the refreshed approach to development for women colleagues
- provide further support to enable networking and shared skills through our colleague network and training opportunities
- provide a focus on women's health with our Women's Network and Menopause Champions to increase understanding and empower colleagues to create change for themselves
- continue with participation in further cohorts of our bespoke Reciprocal Mentoring for Inclusion Programme

Summary

This has been an exciting and successful year for diversity, inclusion and social mobility in the NHSBSA, bringing in lots of new approaches and embedding our approach to social mobility across all our other work. There have been challenges along the way, which we have worked through using creative solutions, and ensuring peer support and our intersectional approach to colleagues was centred.

We know we can do more and we will continue to push forward with our new Diversity, Inclusion and Social Mobility Strategy, working collaboratively with others to achieve our objectives. We will continue to be data informed and to use best practice to guide us along our way. We will continue to maintain our Gold Standard Employer status with the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (enei) TIDE Benchmark, our Disability Confident Leader status, and we will aim to improve on our Carer Confident Status. The Social Mobility Employer Index will remain a key lever to help us achieve our aspirations to be a great employer for social mobility. These benchmarking exercises provide objective measurement against best practice and are comprehensive, evidence-based schemes which inform our work.

Our focus on social mobility and the intersectionality this brings means we have further opportunities to create positive impact in our workplace but also in our communities, using tools such as volunteering and fundraising to support our goals to create positive social impact, building new partnerships within our communities and welcoming the best talent from all backgrounds to the NHSBSA.


Through collaboration with our colleagues, our networks and key stakeholders, and the support of our Leadership Team, we know we can continue to make a meaningful difference to colleagues and communities. This approach will ensure our outcomes are meaningful and have lasting impact in all areas of the NHSBSA and wider.

Diversity, Inclusion and Social Mobility Annual Report

2024-25

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