



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Annual Report 2023 / 2024





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Data collection

Employees

The data we have on employees is based on information provided when an employee joins WDH. This means there are some gaps in terms of up to date knowledge, particularly with regards to disabilities. In 2024 / 2025 we are looking to update this information with a survey to identify the protected characteristics of all our employees so we can ensure we are a diverse and inclusive employer.

Customers

The data we have on customers is based on collecting data on the protected characteristics of all our tenants when they complete a Homesearch application form and subsequently become a tenant with WDH. The data on protected characteristics is therefore based on all of our tenants. For existing customers the data we have on protected characteristics needs refreshing. In 2024 / 2025 we are going to update this information through a comprehensive data collection exercise.

¹This data does not include shared ownership and leasehold tenants / tenancies.

Welcome

Equality, Diversity and inclusion has been a key business priority since our inception in 2005, when we chose 'inclusion' to form part of our core values. Over the years, equality, diversity and inclusion have become deep rooted in our culture. Our aim, each year is to continually build on this.

We believe that we can only prosper as an organisation and as a community if everyone is given a fair chance, which is why we stand against inequality, disadvantage and discrimination. Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

At WDH, we put people first, because everyone matters, every single tenant and every single employee matters.

The diversity within our community grows year after year and we are proud of this growth. We believe that diversity within our communities is a strength. It is imperative that as the diversity

of our community grows, so should the diversity of our workforce. A company can only meet its customer's needs if the profile of the workforce reflects the customers that it serves.

It is important that we welcome all, and we create a workplace where people feel that they belong. Everyone should feel respected and feel that they can be themselves at work. Nobody should be made to feel excluded because of who they are. We want WDH to be a great place for every team member to be and grow.

Of course, there are multiple proven benefits to having a more diverse workforce. A more diverse and inclusive workforce brings forward a variety of views, experiences and ideas and helps to forge innovation, more creativity and success.

Ultimately, our aim is to build a fairer society, starting with our own organisation.

As part of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion we publish this report, which details our current performance, our aspirations and actions for the future.

I am proud of what we have achieved so far. However, our aim is always to strive for further improvement and we are keen to hear how we can be better.

We promise to listen to our tenants, to our employees, to members of the public and our stakeholders. Therefore, if you have any ideas, suggestions, or would like to find out more about equality, diversity and inclusion, please email us at: diversityandinclusion@wdh.co.uk



Andrew Wallhead
Chief Executive

Our **Vision** is to create confident communities, by working collaboratively and inclusively to deliver services people want and need.

Our **Mission** is to inspire, transform and promote excellence.

Our **Values** are to be creative, inclusive and work with integrity.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Equality

is treating people fairly, ensuring that people are not discriminated against because of their characteristic(s).

Diversity

is recognising, respecting and valuing differences.

Inclusion

is ensuring that everyone is given the opportunity to participate.

Legislation

The Equality Act (2010) is a law which protects people from discrimination. People are protected under the Equality Act if they have one or more of the nine protected characteristics, which are:



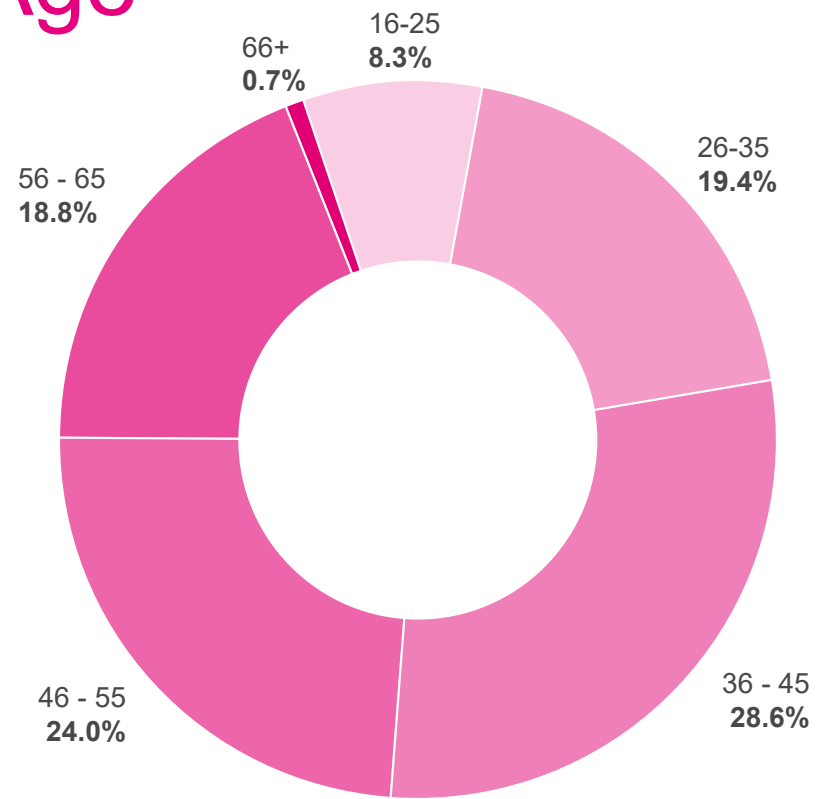
Everyone has at least one of these protected characteristics, which means we are all protected from discrimination under the Equality Act.

Our report presents data on the nine protected characteristics of our employees and tenants. We analyse this data to identify the under-represented groups, outline how we support them and identify what more needs to be done.

First, we present the data on our employees before delving into the data on our customers.

The targets were set as part of the update of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy in July 2022 and will be reviewed every three years with the next time in July 2025. We would expect progress to be steadily made towards these targets over the next three years and we will monitor trends towards these targets on a yearly basis'

Age



8.3% of our employees are aged 16 to 25, indicating that there is an under-representation of employees in this age range.

There is also an under representation of employees over the age of 66, however this figure can be explained as people often choose to retire at the age of 66.

Graduate schemes

In August 2022, we launched the Graduate Scheme which offers university students a range of opportunities to gain relevant work experience, whilst expanding their industry knowledge and skills.

For undergraduates

Our Graduate Placement Scheme gives undergraduates currently undertaking a sandwich degree or wanting to start their career in as specific area often linked to their degree, the opportunity to complete a one-year placement with WDH. We have offered a range of placement options for undergraduates to choose from including placements in:

- Organisational Development working across our Human Resource, Learning and Development and Health and Safety Teams on a range of projects;
- Finance working in our Exchequer Services Team who are responsible for paying suppliers and collecting monies for sundry debts amongst a range of other duties; and
- Our Legal Services Team, which includes litigation, possession, injunctions and disrepair as well as contract law.

For graduates

Our Graduate Trainee Scheme is a two-year training programme for graduates to work across the business on a variety of projects.

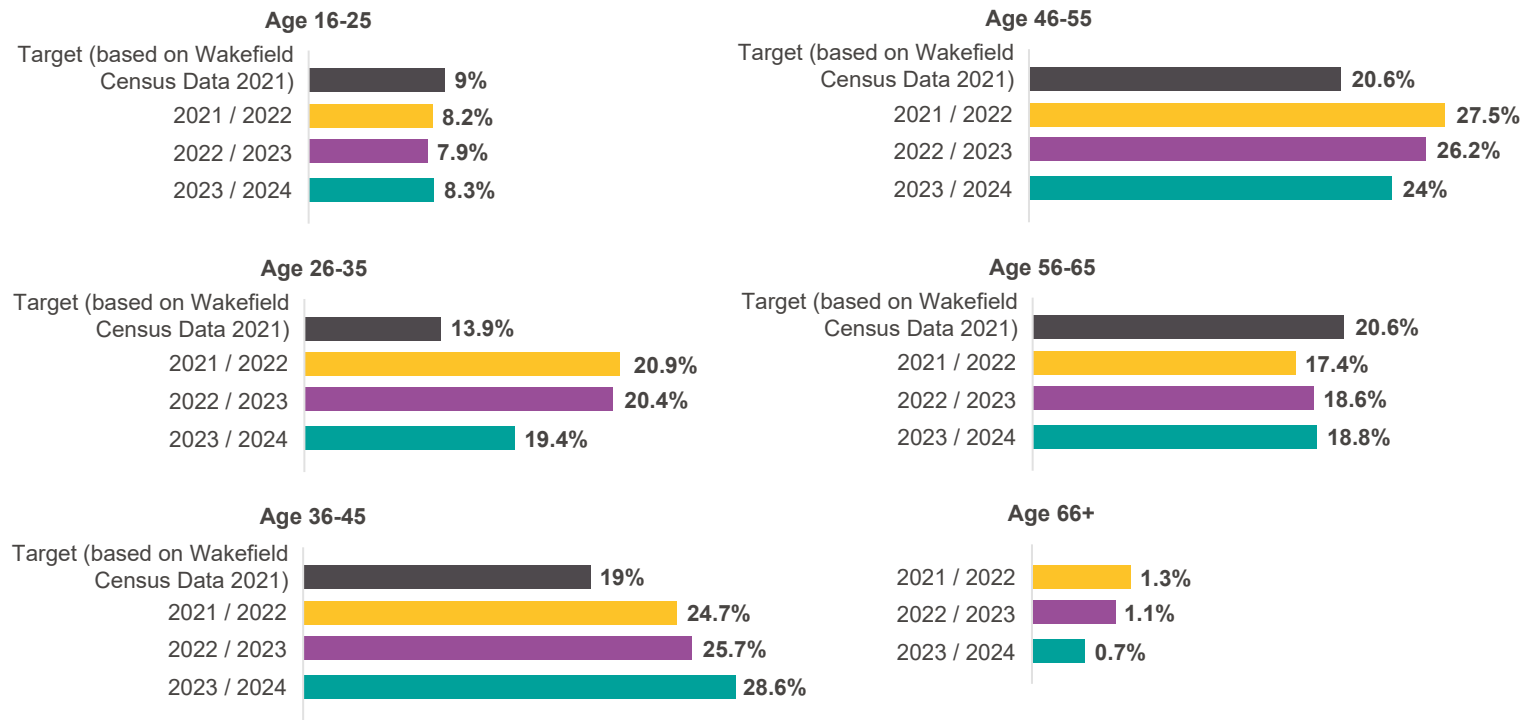
We recruited two Graduate Trainees in 2022 and 2023 and are recruiting to the graduate scheme for 2024. One of our 2022 graduates has already secured a position as a Business Planning Officer

Graduate
A person who has a degree from a college or university.

Undergraduate
A person who is studying for their degree at college or university.

"I applied for the WDH graduate scheme because my lifelong passion for helping people led me to seek a career aligned with this purpose. Prior to encountering this opportunity, I hadn't considered housing as a potential career path during my university experience. However, my time that WDH has proven to be incredibly valuable. I've acquired numerous new skills, bolstered my confidence, and eagerly anticipate the opportunities for development that the graduate scheme promises for my future. Through my time here, I've honed my networking abilities and have consistently received both professional and personal support from the organisation. Mollie Rousso, current Graduate Trainee."

Mollie Rousso
Current Graduate Trainee





Apprenticeships

Our Apprenticeship Scheme is well established and has been running for over 19 years. Apprenticeships give people of all ages the opportunity to train for a particular profession. Apprentices work alongside highly experienced employees and mentors and receive on the job training. They split their time between working with us and attending a college or training provider where they study for a nationally recognised qualification.

Apprentices at WDH are supported by a wider team, including our Apprentice Team Leader and Learning and Development Advisors, who make sure that they have everything they need on their journey.

To help increase the number of younger people across our workforce, we have developed a range of communication tactics, specifically designed to promote our apprenticeships to younger people, including:

- attending schools and colleges events, such as career fairs, take over lessons and parents evenings;
- coordinating a range of open days within our workplace; and
- organising a calendar of events for Apprenticeship Week.

Each year, we take our new apprentices on a week long residential trip to the Outward Bound Centre in the Lake District.

Apprentices take part in a range of activities specially designed to build resilience, confidence, team working along with problem-solving skills. Apprentices take part in rock climbing, abseiling, gorge walking, scrambling and open water activities.

In September 2023, we recruited 10 trade apprentices in Gas, Plumbing, Electrical and Joinery. In March 2024, we began recruiting for an additional 10 apprentices, including, Gas, Plumbing, Joinery, Electrical Bricklaying and Plastering. Our Apprenticeship Scheme is very popular and this year we have received over 300 applications.

"I would definitely recommend a WDH joinery apprenticeship to others as my interest in joinery has grown the more I have been involved in it and I can see a great career involving skills learnt on this course which could set me up for life."

A qualification in any trade seems the best option for young people nowadays in my eyes and joinery is definitely a secure trade as the skills are seen all over the world from modern new builds to refurbished buildings from 100s of years ago. I believe it is the best choice there is as long as you get stuck in."

Paddy Saul
Apprentice Joiner

Working in partnership with local schools

We have worked with a range of local schools and colleges to help pupils understand the world of work and to also highlight WDH as a great employer.

- we hosted work experience placements for 30 pupils this year. This was the first experience of the world of work for most of the young people that took part;

- we developed partnerships with the Heart of Yorkshire College Group, which includes Wakefield College and Castleford College, to provide essential work placements as part of the new T Level qualifications. In the first cohort in 2023/24, eight students did a nine-week placement with us. We are now supporting our second cohort of 10 T Level students to gain valuable experience alongside their studies; and
- we have delivered various activities in local primary and secondary schools, including mock interviews, careers events, presentations and workshops.

Using social media platforms for recruitment

We have expanded where we advertise our job vacancies to ensure that we attract a diverse pool of candidates. This includes increasing advertising our vacancies on social media platforms, including Facebook and LinkedIn, to help attract younger job applicants.

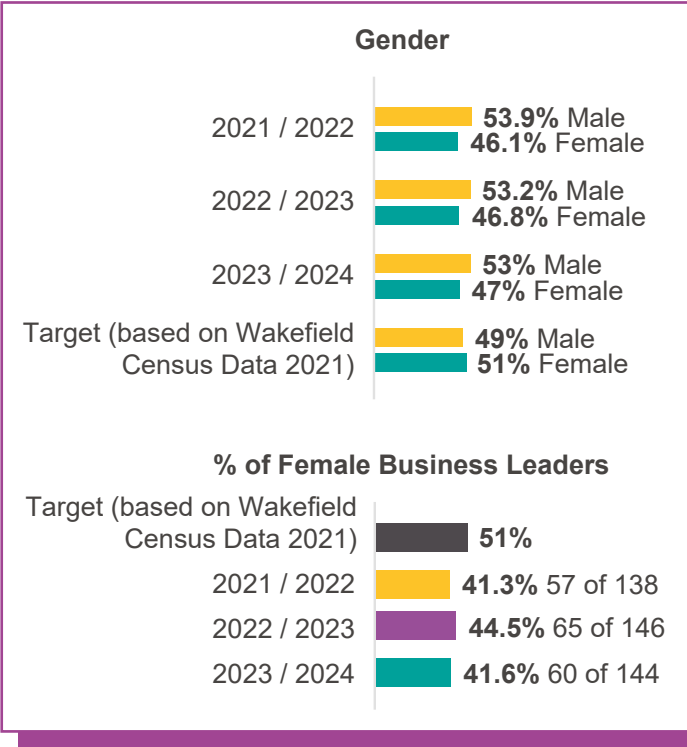
Next steps

- To increase the number of young people such as graduates working in the business to achieve 9% target
- Appoint team leader position to drive forward our campaign and delivery of office based apprenticeships
- Continue to create opportunities for T-level students to gain work experience opportunities.

Sex



We have a slightly higher percentage of men than women.



Gender Pay Gap

We are committed to equality and diversity in all areas of our organisation, and we have a robust and equitable pay and grading structure to ensure fairness.

This is the seventh year of reporting our gender pay gap and we are disappointed to report that our mean gender pay gap has widened slightly this year, increasing from 11.3% to 13.4%. Our median pay gap remains the same at 14.6%. Whilst we know that change takes time, we also understand that the gender pay gap is a complex and multifaceted issue faced by organisations across the UK.

During 2022, we established our gender pay gap working group, and using a data-driven approach, we’ve got a deeper insight into some of the factors which contribute to our gap. This resulted in the creation of our gender pay gap action plan, which contains specific, measurable actions to drive forward as an organisation, which we believe will help us to continue to reduce our gap in future years and ensure equal representation at all levels of our organisation.

The 2022 action plan focused on three key areas:

- increasing gender balance in senior roles at WDH3 and above;
- increasing female representation in our roles in Grades 8 to 11; and
- increasing male representation in our roles in Grades 1 to 7.

Following analysis of our 2023 results, we have identified three additional areas of focus:

- increase full time opportunities in Grades 1 to 6.
- increase part time opportunities at all levels particularly Grade 7 and above; and
- address the gender imbalance at Grade 4.

We are pleased to publish our gender pay gap report and action plan - and we can confirm that the data reported is accurate in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

Women in Leadership Programme

We continued to work in partnership with the Founder of No More Hiding Ltd, Gemma Stow, to help drive women into leadership. This was the fourth cohort of the successful programme which focuses on how women can push past any self-doubts and limiting beliefs that may be holding back their career.

The six workshops were open to ambitious housing professionals and helped them to understand:

- how to own their expertise to promote themselves and their achievements and get the recognition they deserve;
- being more visible so that women are not only role models for others but also increase their own opportunities for career progression; and
- building confidence when it comes to using self-promotion and personal branding strategies for visible leadership.



Our first female Executive Director of Housing

We are pleased to say that in October 2023 we appointed Sarah Roxby as our first female Executive Director of Housing. Sarah is also the proud sponsor of our EmbRACE employee resource group.

Sarah joined WDH in 2006 and now leads our 600 strong Housing team. Sarah also leads the Housing and Health Programme for the West Yorkshire Integrated Care System and has influenced investment from the NHS into key housing related roles. She is passionate about supporting tenants and making sure that everyone has access to services and to opportunities to better themselves and their circumstances.

Gender Pay Gap:
The difference in average pay between all men and women in an organisation, regardless of their role.



Fair recruitment

We believe in fair recruitment; everyone should be given a fair chance to join and progress within our organisation. We have implemented a range of recruitment practices to ensure that our recruitment process is fair and does not disadvantage women:

- we always have gender balanced recruitment panels, ensuring that both men and women sit on every interview panel;
- we use a gender decoder to scan our job adverts, person specifications and job descriptions to ensure that we use gender neutral language; and
- we deliver recruitment training and unconscious bias training to ensure effective recruitment. This works to prevent gender bias and ensures that the best person for the job is selected.

Increasing diversity within our Technical Services team

We recognise that we need to increase the level of diversity within our Technical Services Team, specifically within our Trades Team, which includes roles such as Plumbers, Gas Engineers and Electricians. Data analysis shows that we have an underrepresentation of women working in trades roles. We continue to develop multiple strategies to attract a more diverse pool of candidates to apply for roles within Technical Services, including the promotion of opportunities available through apprenticeships.

Family friendly policies and procedures

We offer employees a range of flexible working options which supports them in managing their work life balance. Our WorkSmart approach to hybrid working helps colleagues to request part time, reduced or compressed hours from day one of employment.

Compressed hours give employees the opportunity to work their contract hours over fewer days.

For example, a full-time 37- hour role is traditionally worked over five days. However, with compressed hours, employees work longer days and work their 37-hours over four days instead of five, or nine days instead of 10.

To ensure a healthy work-life balance, we offer 26 days holiday (rising to 31 after five years' service) and an extra day off on your birthday, plus bank holidays and an Annual Leave Purchase Scheme. Annual leave is pro-rata for part-time employees.

"I enjoy my role at WDH, throughout my career I have always found that I am at my best in a high-pressure environment and find in my particular role many of my days can be non-stop. I applied for compressed hours / flexible working to ensure I was looking after my own wellbeing while taking advantage of having additional days away from work to concentrate on my personal interests and enabling me to support my daughter and my first grandchild. From a personal perspective, this arrangement gives me additional days to focus on myself and spend all important time with my granddaughter"

Gary Jones
Operations Manager - Mechanical and Electrical.

International Men's Day

Every year, organised by the Men's Health Forum, Men's Health Week aims to raise awareness of preventable health problems that disproportionately affect men and encourage them to gain the courage to tackle their issues. Following the success of our Mental Health Awareness Week this year, we held another event which was open to all employees who could be affected by issues with their mental health and/or prostate cancer.

We invited special guests, Andy's Man Club to deliver a talk on men's mental health, and representatives from Prostate Cancer UK who delivered a very informative and engaging presentation.

Inspire Inclusion: International Women's Day

This year we are kickstarting **#inspiringInclusion** by highlighting two of our key features which will be included in our plan of action, focusing on making sure women's issues and challenges are heard, recognised, and taken on board throughout the year and not just on one day.

We will:

- **Be launching our Women's Network page on the employee hub.** This will be an area where we can share discussions, information, tips, and techniques.
- **Feature a theme every month as voted by members of the Women's Networking Group.**

Hot topics include wellbeing, flexible working, improving confidence, career development, guest speakers and many more.

At WDH, we are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and have a **robust policy** in place to eliminate discrimination in our workplaces. Our Dignity at Work Guidance confirms that all employees are entitled to:

- be treated with dignity, respect and courtesy;
- a workplace free from bullying, harassment or victimisation;
- experience no form of discrimination; and
- be valued for their skills and abilities.

Next steps

- To increase the number of women in leadership roles to achieve 51% target
- Continue to provide opportunities for women to develop key skills to drive their career forward.
- Implement strategies that will attract and improve more take up of men in office-based roles and women in technical roles.



Disability



The Equality Act (2010) defines disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.



We are a Disability Confident employer. This means we are committed to:

- recruiting people with disabilities and health conditions; and
- supporting our employees who have disabilities and health conditions.

Recruiting people with disabilities and health conditions

We ensure that the recruitment process is inclusive and accessible by:

- promoting our Disability Confident status in our recruitment campaigns so that potential candidates know we are committed to recruiting people with disabilities;
- guaranteeing interviews to candidates who declare that they have a disability if they meet the minimum job criteria;
- accepting job applications that are completed in different formats (written and online); and
- asking all job applicants if they need adjustments making to the interview process and implementing all reasonable adjustments.

Supporting our employees with disabilities and health conditions

We provide support to employees who have disabilities and health conditions by:

- having accessible buildings - all of our buildings are wheelchair accessible and have hearing loops;
- working with trained occupational therapists, which helps us to better understand the individual needs of our employees;
- providing 14 new electric riser desks in our offices;
- using clear English in our internal communication, writing clearly and concisely so that people reading the information can understand it easily;
- offering complimentary physiotherapy to staff, including: short-term ‘physio on the pitch,’ referrals for six free physiotherapy sessions and / or discounted physiotherapy treatments; and
- providing discounted health club membership. All employees receive discounted membership at Aspire gyms.

Wellbeing Champions

Disability History Month

This year the national theme for Disability History Month was Disability, Children and Youth. To raise awareness about disabilities and the support that is available, we held an employee engagement event in addition to having videos and podcasts to raise awareness.

Employee event

Over 150 employees joined us to learn more about disabilities and the support available. During the event we had stalls which were run by WDH staff or external organisations, this included:

Internal

- Social Inclusion Team
- HR Team – sunflower lanyard
- Fidgets stall –To raise awareness about fidget toys, which are used by some users to help them tolerate anxiety, frustration, agitation, boredom, and excitement
- Care Link Team

External

- Carers Wakefield
- Wakefield Council’s SEND Preparing for Adulthood Team
- Wakefield Council’s Employment Hub
- Wakefield Parent Carer Forum
- NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board

Sunflower lanyards

The HR team showcased the alternative lanyards available in WDH, this included our rainbow lanyards which are a sign of LGBTQ+ allyship and they also introduced the new sunflower lanyards.

Sunflower lanyards can be chosen to be worn by people with disabilities. This can be especially important for people with hidden disabilities.



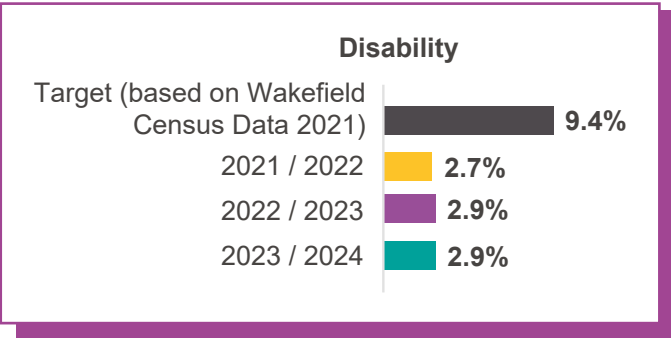
Podcasts

We produced two podcasts for Disability History Month.

The first featured Elizabeth Faulkner, Senior Facilities Management Officer, and her experience of dealing with disability when she was told that one of her identical twin sons had been diagnosed with cerebral palsy and the journey they have undertaken so far. The second podcast discusses the support and policies in place at WDH for employees with disabilities or those supporting a person with a disability.

Videos

- We also had a range of videos playing at our Disability History Month event:
- Living with ADHD - Ashlyne Tierney, Estate Support Officer had a chat with us about her story of living with ADHD;
 - Living with Tourette's - Laura Shallcross, Support Team Supervisor chatted to us about what is like living with Tourette's.;
 - Working Carers – The West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership has produced this video, which shows what a day in the life of a working carer is like; and
 - 100 Basic Signs in British Sign Language



Mindful Employer Pledge

During the Disability History Month event the Mindful Employer pledge was also signed by our Director of Organisational Development, underlining our commitment to supporting mental health at work.

During the event, we offered employees the opportunity to provide feedback. The survey requested attendees to rate the event, tell us about their favourite aspects and asked how WDH could be more inclusive going forward.



Support for the menopause

- We recognise the impact that the menopause can have, which is why we have developed a Menopause Policy which aims to:
- make managers aware of their responsibility to understand how the menopause can affect employees, and how they can support those experiencing the menopause at work;
 - foster an environment in which employees can openly and comfortably instigate conversations or engage in discussions about the menopause in a respectful and supportive way;
 - raise wider awareness and understanding among all employees about the menopause;
 - enable employees experiencing the menopause to continue to be effective in their jobs;
 - outline support and reasonable adjustments available; and
 - help us recruit and retain employees experiencing the menopause.

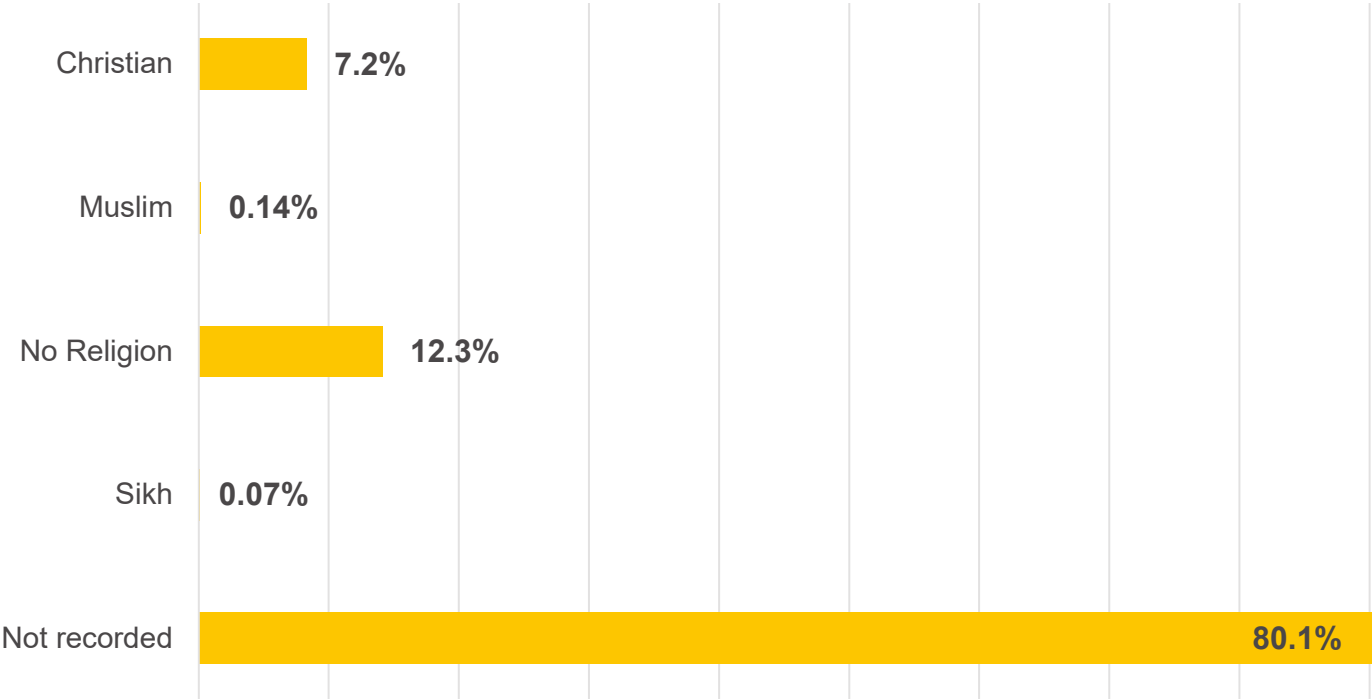
We are delighted that we now have our very own Menopause Champions within the organisation who are fully trained to support those experiencing the menopause. This offers a range of support through support groups and enables individuals to feel safe in discussing such issues. We also have support groups for male employees to attend to discuss any issues which they feel may be helpful to them. This could be their own personal experiences of supporting partners, friends and family members or those who manage female employees which enables them to have a wider awareness around reasonable adjustments within the workplace.

Next steps

- Implement initiatives for employees to declare disability or long term health condition to move towards a 9.4% target
- Task our Accessibility and Wellbeing resource group to review our recruitment practices to ensure that our job vacancies attract a diverse pool of candidates.
- In addition, plan and deliver more awareness sessions that aim to remove stigma around various health conditions.



Religion



Our data shows that 12.3% of our employees have “no religion”, 7.2% of our employees are Christian, 0.14% are Muslim, and 0.07% are Sikh.

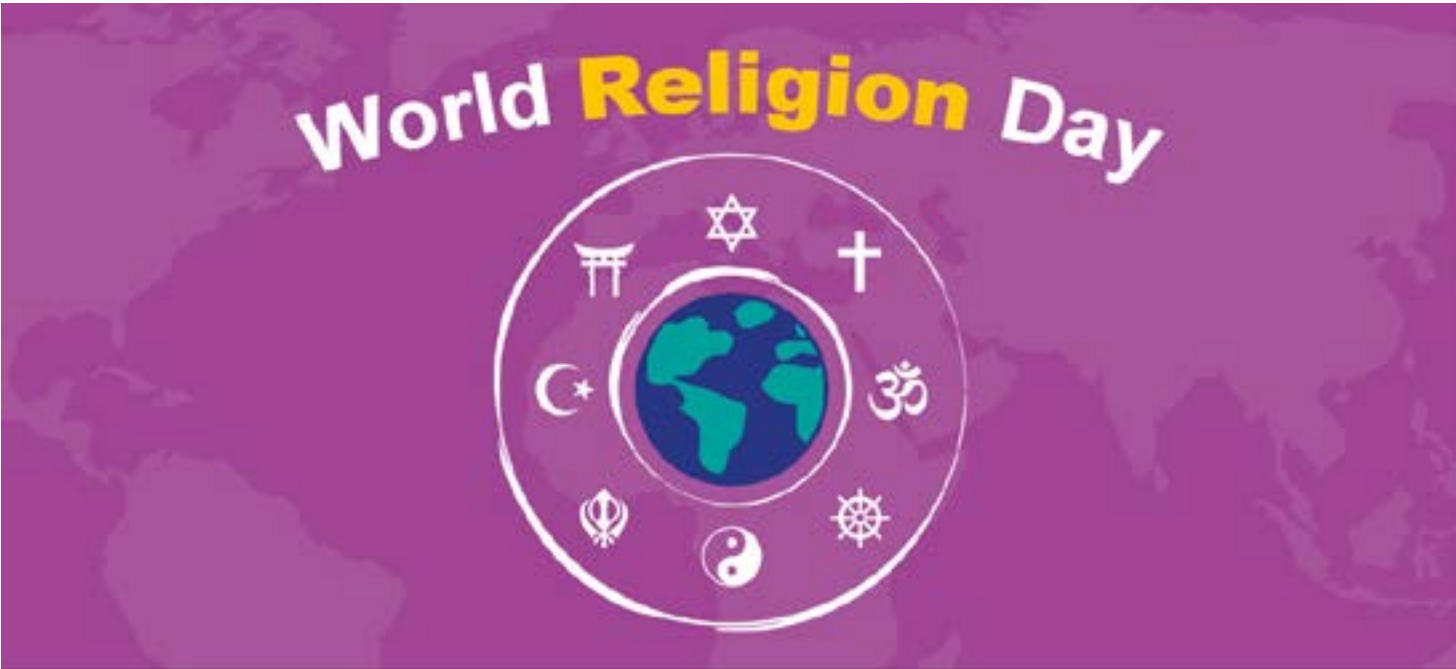
We recognise that we still have missing data on our employees’ religion. To address this, we are introducing a new employee self-serve tool, which will enable each employee to update their own personal information, including their religion. This will be implemented in 2024 and it will help us to better understand the profile of our workforce.

We respect our employees’ religions and beliefs by:

During May 2023, we recognised World Day for Cultural Diversity (which took place on Sunday, 21 May) by showcasing a magnificent display of food, fun and culture to celebrate different traditions, cuisine, music and to learn about our local history.

We had an array of stalls within our head office, Merefield House, plus entertainment and even a prize-winning quiz.

The stalls celebrated items from employees that represented different cultures and backgrounds which included artefacts such as jewellery, clothing, paintings and other. At WDH, we continue to respect our employees by ensuring that our Dress Code Policy supports people to wear their religious dress and giving them the right to request flexible or home working for religious or belief reasons.



World Religion Day

As part of our cultural awareness campaigns, we decided to shine the spotlight on Islam to celebrate World Religion Day which falls on the third Sunday in January every year. We were fortunate to have an employee who kindly shared more awareness about what Islam is.

World Religion Day aims to promote understanding and peace between all religions.

“Ramadan is the most important time of the year for a Muslim as it is a time for self-control, discipline, perseverance, resilience, positivity, appreciation, reflection, forgiveness and a real test of character and strength. There is much more to Ramadan than just not eating and drinking (fasting). As well as the fasting, it is also a time for abundance of prayer, to reflect, re-set, redeem and reboot by cherishing the daily privileges we take for granted which the less fortunate, poor and needy yearn to have such as food, drink, shelter, money, family, good health and many more things.”

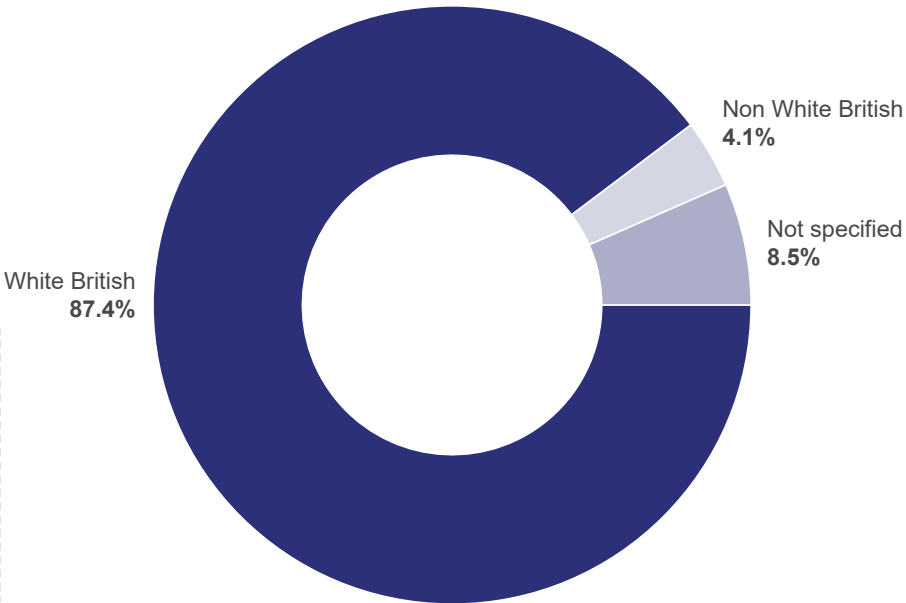
Umera Hussain
Homesearch Support Officer

Race

87.4% of our employees describe themselves as White British. Our Black, Asian, and Ethnic minority employees make up 4.1% of our workforce.

Ethnic minorities

We follow the Office of National Statistics recommended language and use the term 'ethnic minorities' to refer to all ethnic groups except the White British group.



Ethnic Pay Gap 2023

This year we are pleased to publish our first Ethnicity Pay Gap Report. Whilst it is not currently a statutory requirement to report on ethnicity pay data, we believe doing so demonstrates our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in all areas of our organisation.

We are pleased to report that our Mean Ethnicity Pay Gap is -0.2%, and our Median Ethnicity Pay Gap is 1.4%. Whilst these results show White British and Non-White British employees earn similar amounts at WDH, the Non-White British group are under-represented in our workforce, making up just 4.1% of our headcount in April 2023.

We have tasked our EmbRACE group, to share ideas and taking action to increase representation and the feeling of belonging for ethnic minorities at all levels within WDH.

We are committed to achieving racial equality

October is **Black History Month**, where people come together to recognise the outstanding contributions and achievements black people have made to society.

Black History Month is important to us because focusing on people who have been fundamental in British History gives all of us the opportunity to understand, learn, share and celebrate everyone’s contribution to our communities.

This is something campaigners are keen to address as they feel many traditional events celebrating white figures can often overtake those of black heritage.

Our theme in 2023 was ‘**Saluting our Sisters**’ marking the many amazing black women who have made invaluable and exceptional contributions and achievements, those who have moved mountains, those who have pioneered and those who have broken barriers. Our employees who are from ethnic backgrounds shared their rich and vibrant stories of influential black women and we spoke to some of our own community and asked why events like Black History Month are important.



Ethnic Minority	
Target (based on Wakefield Census Data 2021)	7%
2021 / 2022	2.6%
2022 / 2023	3.7%
2023 / 2024	4.1%

Our **Chief Executive, Andy Wallhead**, is our executive sponsor for the **Race at Work Charter**.

He said: “It’s important that we create a culture where everyone feels that they belong. Black History Month is a time where we reaffirm our commitment to racial and ethnic diversity. We remind people that we stand against racism, prejudice, and discrimination.”

Next steps

- Task our EmbRACE resource group to review our recruitment practices to ensure that our job vacancies attract a diverse pool of candidates to achieve 7% target.
- Continue to provide development opportunities to enable employees from ethnic minority backgrounds to equitably apply for leadership roles.
- To start an ‘Elevate Colour’ programme to support the development of ethnically diverse employees.

Sexual orientation

We have started to collect data on the number of employees who are trans or non-binary but are in the early stages of this process, so we do not have this data to share yet. We are currently introducing a new employee self-serve tool which will enable each employee to update their own personal information, including if they are trans or non-binary. This will be implemented in 2024 and it will help us to better understand the profile of our workforce.

Increasing LGBTQ+ awareness

Throughout 2023, we held a series of workshops, delivered by Stonewall, on increasing understanding of the LGBTQ+ community including gender identity, challenging myths and outlining the importance of taking actions such as sharing pronouns.

All of our Corporate Management Team (CMT) have attended as well as nearly 100 employees.



We continue to show allyship to the LGBTQ+ community

We are fully committed to creating an environment where people can be themselves, something that we all want and deserve. As part of this commitment, we gave employees the option of adding their personal pronouns to their email signature. This is a positive step to creating a more inclusive environment for the trans and non-binary community.

Trans

A trans person’s gender identity is not the same, or does not sit comfortably with the sex on their original birth certificate.

This new initiative provides a platform for trans and non-binary people to communicate their personal pronoun, which helps to prevent trans and non-binary people from being misgendered. For those who are not part of the trans or non-binary community, adding their personal pronouns to their email signature is an act of allyship to the trans and non-binary community and the wider LGBTQ+ community.

Adding personal pronouns makes a real difference in reassuring our trans and non-binary, and broader LGBTQ+ employees and tenants, that they are welcome and accepted for who they are.

In addition, over 150 of our employees have changed their corporate lanyards to a rainbow lanyard which is recognised symbol of allyship to the LGBTQ+ community. Many of our employees wear these when visiting tenants which visually shows tenants that we are an organisation that shows solidarity and support for the LGBTQ+ community and have received awareness training.

Transgender and Gender Reassignment Equality Policy

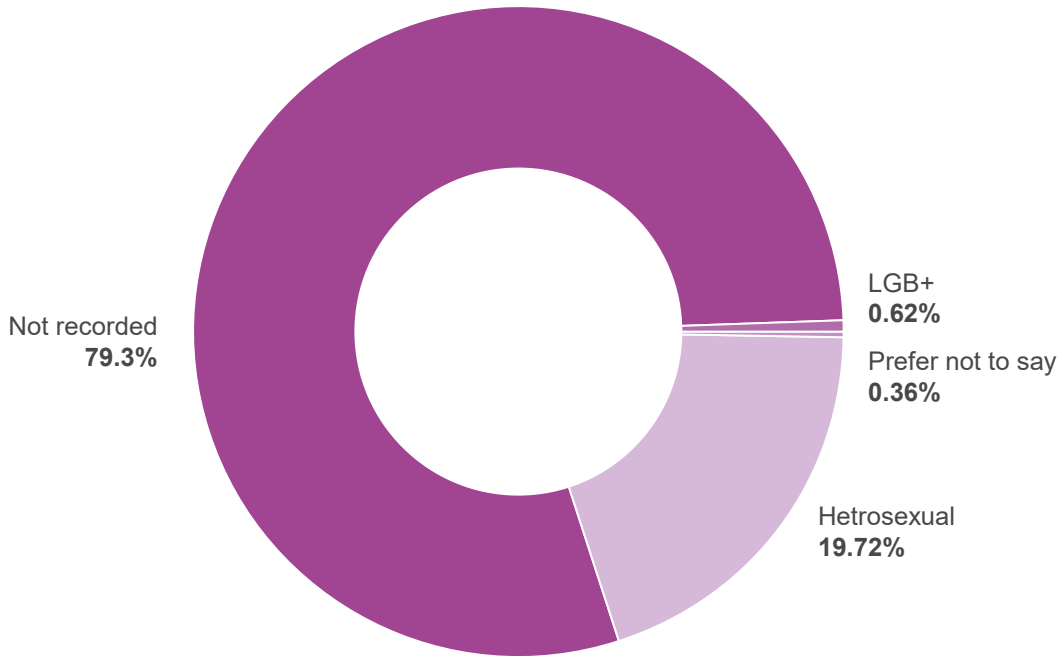
We have done a review of our Transgender and Gender Reassignment Equality Policy, which supports employees who wish to, or have, reassigned their gender. The main changes we made were updating on gender identity terminology and setting targets to increase employee awareness on Transgender and Gender Reassignment and on taking positive action.

Working with LGBTQ+ specialist organisations

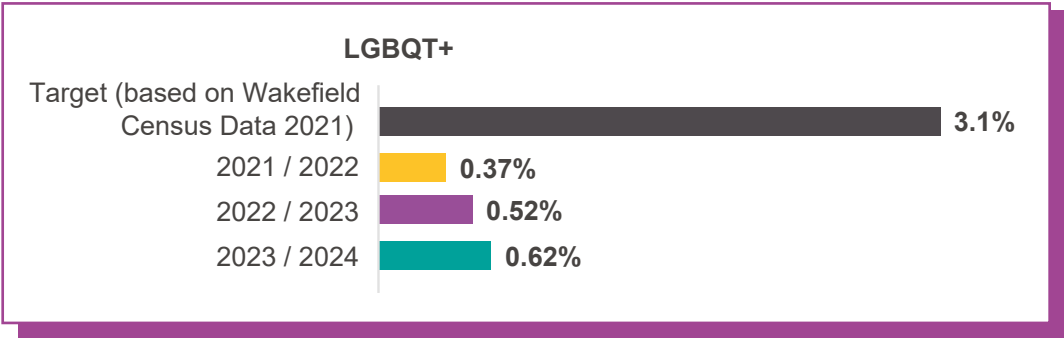
We continue to work with Stonewall to ensure we have specialist support on raising awareness on the LGBTQ+ community. We have also attended Wakefield Pride again to show our commitment to being seen as a housing association that is inclusive for everyone.

Non binary

An umbrella term for people who do not feel comfortable identifying as a ‘man’ or ‘woman’. They identify outside of the traditional gender binary of a man or women.



The data we hold shows that 19.72% of employees have told us they are Heterosexual, and 0.62% of employees have told us they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other.



Next steps

- Task The Pride Network resource group to plan and deliver initiatives such as Pride month and Wakefield Pride.
- In addition, increase awareness about intersectionality and support for people from LGBTQ+ community.
- Become a Stonewall Diversity Champion to gain advice and support to develop policies and practices in line with LGBTQ+ best practice.



Marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity

WorkSmart and flexible working

We have a flexible approach to where employees work as long as they meet customer and business needs. This is known as WorkSmart or hybrid working. Sometimes, this can mean working at home, in an office or for some, out in the community supporting customers.

The key to WorkSmart is working where employees can best meet customers' needs, whilst providing more flexibility. To help support a more hybrid approach, our premises have been redesigned.

This has included ensuring all employees have access to the technology they need to work remotely and updating meeting rooms with virtual meeting technology and creating meeting pods. Our Employee Survey results from October 2023 demonstrated high satisfaction with WorkSmart with most employees feeling it helped improve productivity.

Employees have the right to request a range of flexible working options including part-time, term-time and compressed hours from day one of joining us. This is to support employee retention by offering a better work-life balance whilst meeting business needs.

In October 2022, we formally relaunched our Flexible Working Policy to all employees, particularly promoting compressed hours. Since then, over 20% of employees have moved onto this work pattern and an additional 10% of employees have a flexible working pattern such as part-time working. This ensures we attract and keep the best employees to meet customers' needs.

As a modern and forward-thinking business, WDH has fantastic flexible working arrangements for employees.

In my role as Service Director, the organisation has supported me to compress my hours over four days each week to assist with childcare arrangements which as a new parent is something that will make a real difference for me.

The WorkSmart approach is a real positive for the business and will help to attract and retain the right people across the organisation."

Pete Beaumont
Service Director - Housing.

International Day of Families was established by the United Nations (UN) to raise awareness of the issues faced by families throughout the world and highlight the important role that families hold in the community.

International Day of Families

Once again in May 2023, to mark International Day of Families we asked our employees to send in photos of their families and tell us why their family is important to them.

Gifts for New Babies

We are committed to being a caring, compassionate, and family-friendly employer who values our employees not only as professionals but also as individuals with personal lives. Welcoming a new baby into the world is a wonderful, milestone occasion worth celebrating and so we plan to do just that.

To celebrate the arrival of our employees' new babies, we are delighted to be working in partnership with little mouse, a small independent business that offers high quality, sustainable and ethically sourced clothing and gifts, to provide new baby gift boxes for all new arrivals.



Next steps

- Promote more awareness campaigns around Work Smart flexible working patterns.
- Promote Shared parental leave and inform future fathers it is their legal right to request shared parental leave and provide future parents with guidance and support to understand the scheme.
- Continue to offer a maternity package that is more generous than the statutory maternity pay.



Diversity and inclusion



Next steps

- Ensure that we obtain a 100% completion rate for our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) e-learning training.
- Increase opportunities for employees to attend ED&I initiatives that will drive awareness of issues faced by underrepresented groups.
- Ensure that our Employee Resource Groups are actively sponsored by members of our Corporate Management Team.

Employee resource groups

At WDH, we all have the power to create a work environment where everyone is valued and respected for who they are. That is why we have empowered our employees to make a difference by encouraging them to join one (or more) of our staff-led Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and use their skills, knowledge and lived experiences to help us achieve our goal of becoming a diverse and inclusive workplace which is a fair representation of our local communities.

We have a range of inclusion groups that are in progress or due to be launched soon:

- **Gender Pay Gap Working Group**
The group works together to identify further strategies to close our Gender Pay Gap. It is not a gender specific group, and men are welcome and encouraged to attend;
- **embRACE Forum**
Open to people from ethnically diverse backgrounds and allies, who will work together to progress racial equality and inclusion within WDH and the community;
- **LGBTQ+ forum**
For members of the LGBTQ+ community and allies to get together and discuss and identify additional strategies to support the LGBTQ+ community;
- **The Future Workforce**
For our younger employees (aged 16-25) and allies to discuss and identify strategies to recruit, retain and develop our younger workforce; and
- **Wellbeing and Accessibility Network**
Help make our workspaces accessible and inclusive for all. Open to those who have lived experience or those who feel they can contribute to how we can improve our accessibility.

Award-winning Fellowship leadership programme for ethnically diverse employees

We continually look for ways to help support and develop employees that are underrepresented, as it is important to us to have a fair diverse representation at all levels within the business. We offered employees the opportunity to be part of the Fellowship Programme - an award-winning leadership development programme aimed specifically at colleagues from ethnically diverse backgrounds and aimed at those who are looking to progress into their first leadership position.

The programme is coordinated by West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership, and we are delighted to share that one of our employees was successful in securing a position on the Fellowship Programme which lasts for 18 months.

To mark **International Youth Day** on 12 August 2023, which highlights the valuable contribution young people make and raises awareness of the issues important to them, we planned two young people's forums to gather their views on how we can best recruit, retain and develop our younger workforce.

Following the success of these forums the ideas and suggestions collated have helped to form an action plan, overseen by The Future Workforce ERG (Employee Resource Groups), which will:

- provide support to WDH young employees to prepare them for their financial future, promotion and health and wellbeing;
- encourage and facilitate change that enables their voice to be heard when making key decisions regarding employees' future in the business; and
- help the business be more creative and competitive when attracting more young people to join us.

A key part of our mission is to inspire our employees, tenants and partners to achieve their ambitions. In recent months we've been gathering feedback from employees through surveys such as our Women's Survey and the Employee Survey, to find out how colleagues feel about WDH as a great place to work.

The surveys give us a good insight into how we are doing but we want to delve deeper into areas that are consistently raised by employees and managers, particularly in relation to any barriers to career progression.

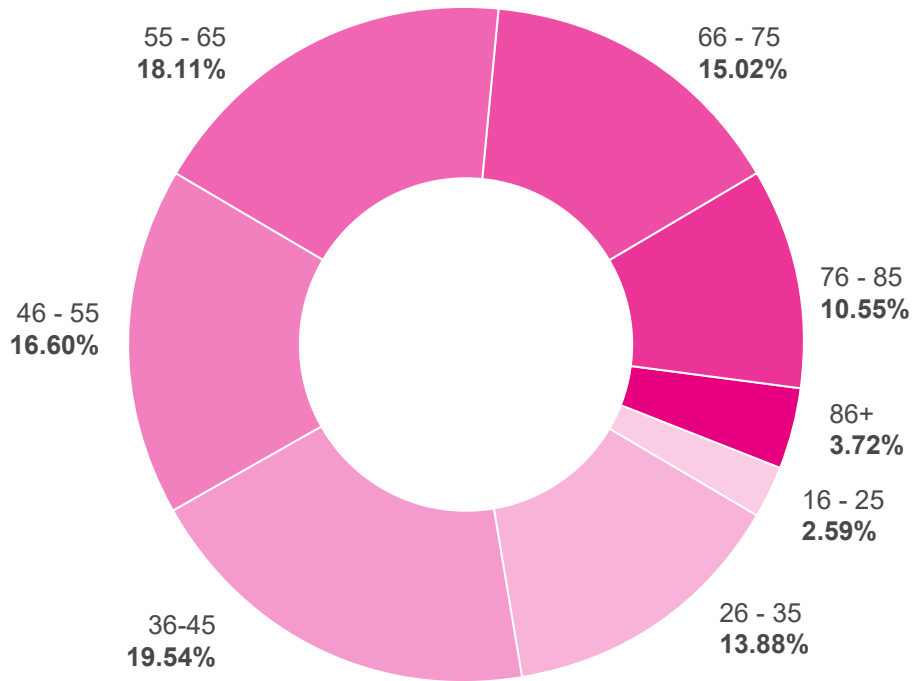
There was lots of feedback and ideas and it became clear that most comments related to similar themes. These are:

- making sure that promotion and recruitment opportunities are fair;
- increasing the visibility of leaders;
- welcoming challenge;
- being inclusive to all; and
- having an open and honest work culture.

These are the themes we are going to focus on this year, with lots of activity and initiatives to improve the employee experience. We'll also be showcasing some of the things we offer employees for example, employees have an extra day annual leave to be taken on their birthday.



Age



Supporting younger people

We offer our young people a range of opportunities to develop their skills and employability.

Last year, in partnership with Wakefield Council's Youth Team and match funded by WF Happy Healthy Holidays, we delivered five Branching Out weeks, each designed to support young people with additional barriers to achieve their potential and to help them develop and overcome the challenges they will face as they grow older.

75 young people aged between 13 and 16 participated in a range of different experiences designed to improve their resilience, communication and team building skills, including a Social Action Day within the district. All young people participating live on our estates, the majority in WDH homes.

We supported a young person with additional needs with a 12-week work placement within our Facilities team. The placement was offered as part of the international Project Search programme designed to support young people into employment, providing them with full wraparound help and assistance to help them gain the skills and experience they need in their journey to permanent employment.

Supporting older people

We provide a range of services to support our older tenants to live independently.

Independent living schemes

Some of our older tenants are unable to, or choose not to, live in their own home. Instead, they live in one of our independent living schemes (ILS) or extra care schemes, which are located throughout the Wakefield district. Independent living schemes are a group of self-contained homes which are designed for older or vulnerable people. Each scheme has a Community Support Worker (CSW) or Extra Care Scheme Manager (ECSM), who is on hand to provide support. The CSW or ECSM assists residents to arrange a variety of social activities to encourage social inclusion and in 2024 we are looking to recruit an Events Co-ordinator to further support this offer to residents.

Extra care schemes offer the same facilities as our traditional ILSs (Independent Living Schemes). However, extra care provides tenants with additional support, such as a daily hot meal and domestic assistants who carry out light cleaning. It offers an alternative to residential care, encouraging residents to remain independent. There are 33 independent living schemes across the district, two of which are extra care schemes. Our ILS are home to 1,578 residents, with 180 new tenants joining us in 2023 / 2024.



Lifelong learning

We have been focusing on the wellbeing and social inclusion of our residents in ILS. We have done this by working with Creative Minds and TSS Sports to deliver exercise classes across our schemes.

A total of **167** sessions were delivered across **six** different ILS and **one** extra care scheme in the Wakefield District. On average, **eight** people attended each session.

We recognise the importance of social activities in our ILS and this year, we coordinated a whopping 2,803 social activities across our ILS, with 27,867 people benefiting. Each week across our ILS we deliver over 50 social activities, which includes bingo, coffee mornings and arts and craft sessions.

Events for older people:

We have supported and coordinated a range of events for older people:

- We delivered several Christmas events at our ILS across the district.
- Theme days are held in our extra care schemes throughout the year, where the dining room is decorated and games and quizzes are played, which is well received by tenants.
- We have provided funding at our Stoneygarth ILS for Grow Wakefield to work with tenants on a gardening initiative.
- We have supported tenants at other schemes with established gardening projects to develop further.
- The resident involvement team continue to work with tenants and their families to develop new tenants' groups, including 'friends of' societies.

From January 2024, Frickley Athletic in partnership with Wakefield Council have delivered sessions across two of our Independent Living Schemes within the Southeast of the District. They delivered 18 sessions between January and March 2024, with around 15 people getting involved in each session.

We also organised intergenerational events to prevent social isolation with older people.



"I've loved meeting people, I feel fitter and I am able to walk better."

Independent Living Resident
Regarding Lifelong Learning

"I have a more positive outlook and I am much more energetic."

Independent Living Resident
Regarding Lifelong Learning

Sex



61.12% of our tenants are women, compared to 38.87% of tenants who are men.

Disability



Next steps

- We are updating our data on disability in the next financial year to ensure we meet the diverse needs of our customers and provide reasonable adjustments.

We provide a range of support for our tenants who have disabilities and health conditions.

Supporting physical needs

Our Adaptations Team provides assessments for minor adaptations in tenants’ homes. These adaptations make it safer for these customers to move around their home and carry out everyday tasks, whilst supporting them to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible.

The service promotes independence and the benefits delivered to our customers are often felt for years. In 2023 / 2024, our Adaptations Team processed 687 adaptation referrals and received 166 health and medical rehousing requests.

We also have several accessible homes, including wheelchair accessible homes.

Care Link

Care Link is our telecare and response service. Through personal alarms, home sensors and other monitored devices, Care Link customers can get help 24 hours a day, every day.

Currently, we have 14,966 (at the end of 2023 / 2024) customers.



Supporting hospital discharge

We have hospital Housing Co-ordinators who work at Fieldhead and Pinderfields Hospitals to support inpatients who are experiencing housing related barriers to discharge. The Housing Co-ordinators will help to address these barriers, helping the patient have a timely discharge from hospital. Pinderfields and Fieldhead Housing Co-ordinators received 185 new referrals into the service in 2023 / 2024.

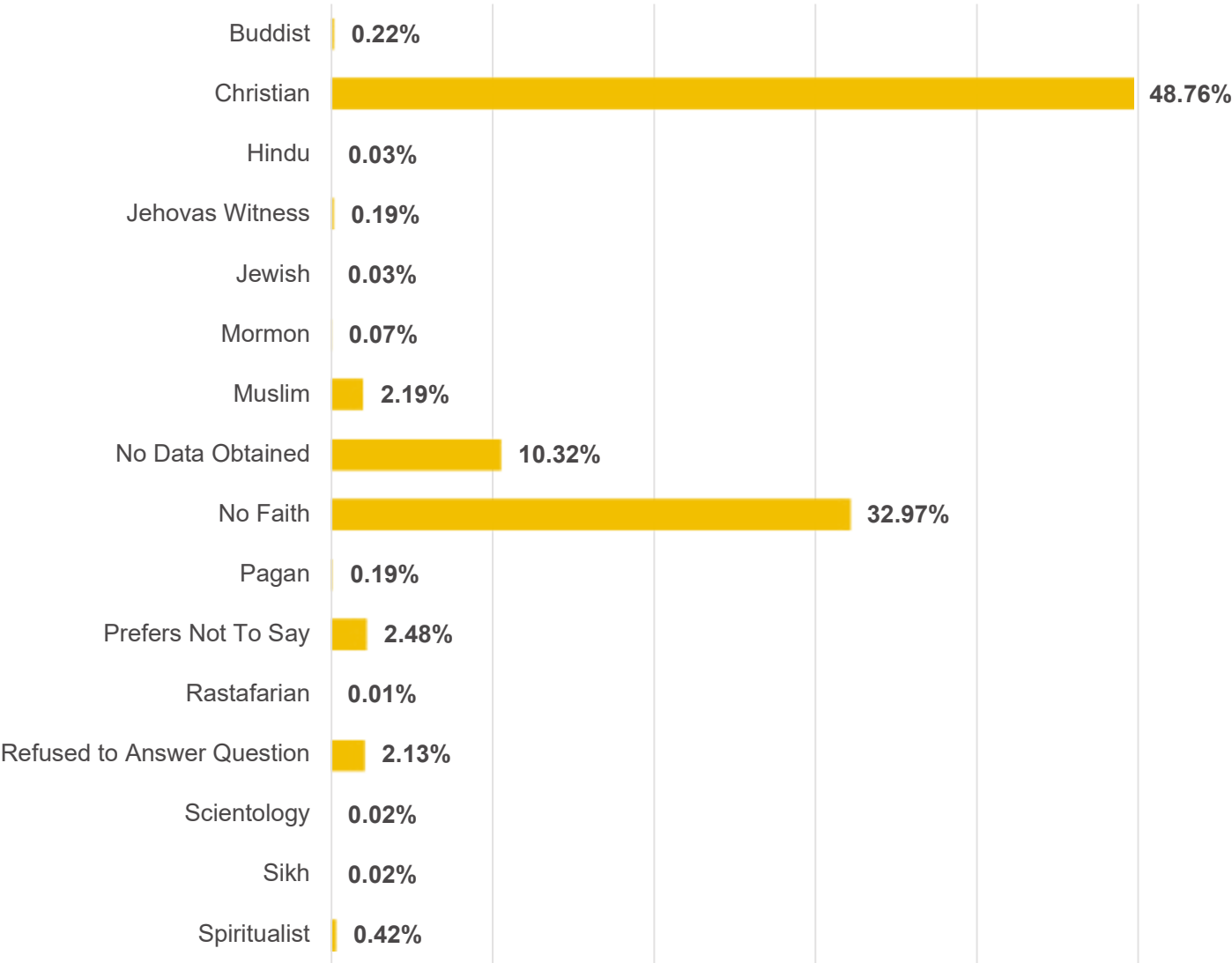
In 2023 we expanded this offer and introduced a Housing Coordinator to support those with learning disabilities and autism, operating across the Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield districts. The coordinator has been in post since December 2023 and received 18 referrals to date.

Supporting mental health and wellbeing

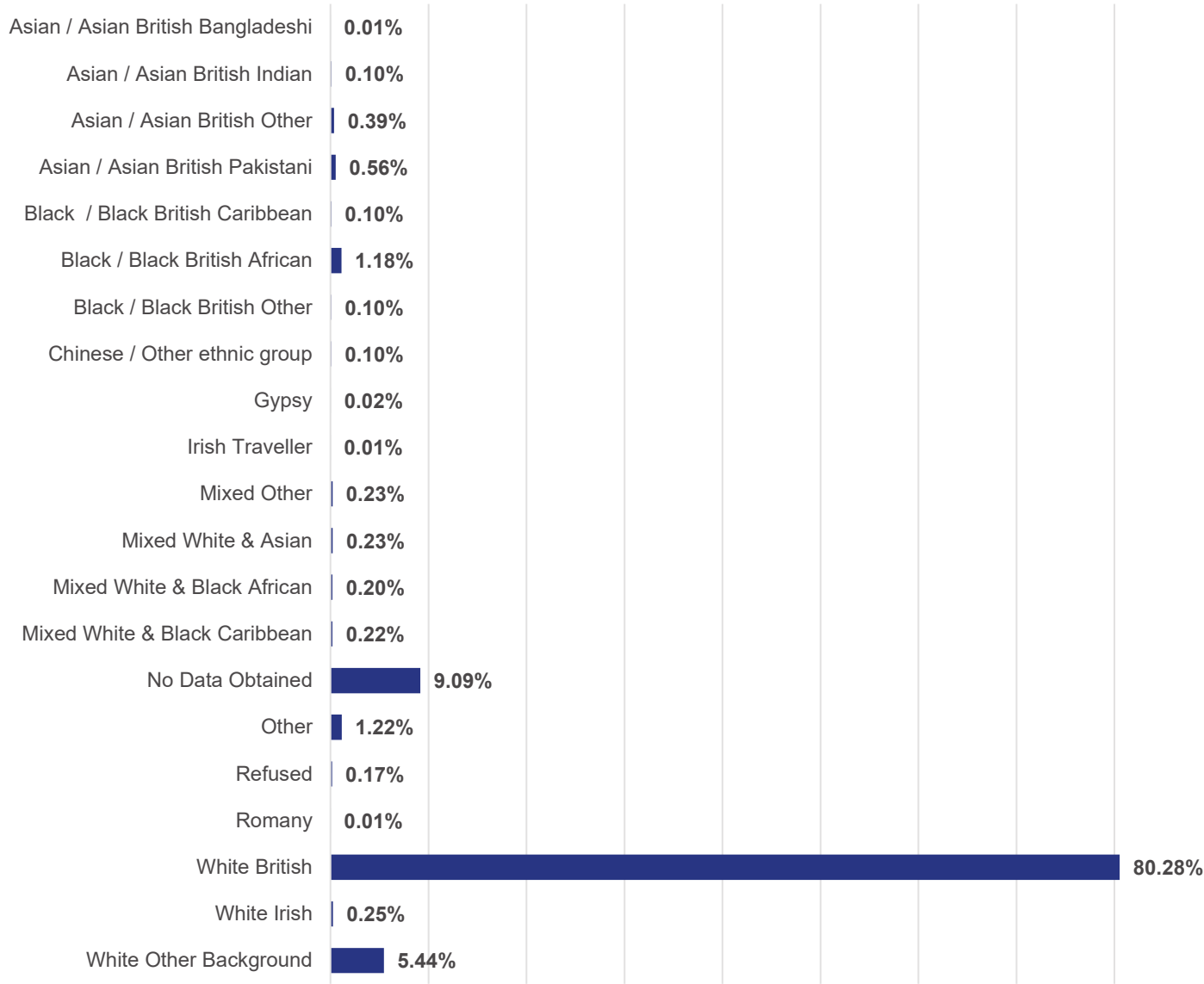
Our Wellbeing Team supports tenants to address barriers that are preventing them from living a healthy and sustainable lifestyle. Tenants receive support to address the barriers, whilst also learning the skills to manage their own health and wellbeing. In 2023 / 2024, we accepted over 1,130 wellbeing referrals into the service.



Religion



Race



Celebrating and raising awareness

Our tenants have a range of religious beliefs. It is important that everyone’s religion is valued and respected. We use our social media pages to raise awareness of and celebrate the different religions of our tenants.

Shared calendars

We consider all religious festivals when planning our resident involvement activities to make sure our residents’ faiths do not become a barrier to participating in our activities. We have a shared calendar which is populated with religious festivals.

Root Out Racism

We firmly believe in racial equality. We have officially pledged our commitment to challenge racism in our community by joining the anti-racism movement Root Out Racism. We use our social media channels to promote this pledge to our tenants and further show that we stand against racism.



Interpreters

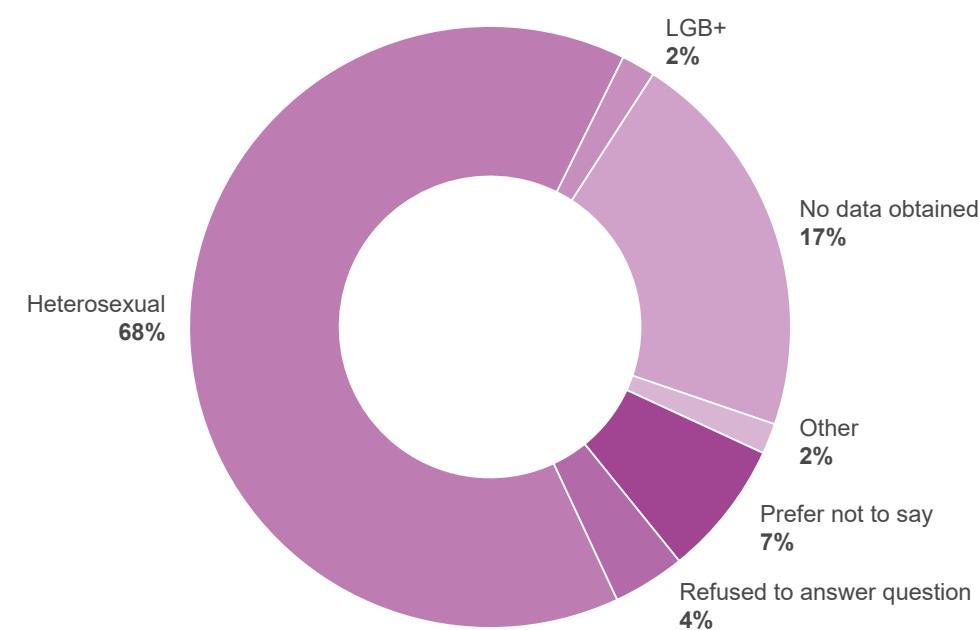
Our tenants speak a variety of languages, so we use Language Line to enable our employees to communicate with everyone. Language Line is a 24-hour phone interpreting service, which provides immediate access to qualified interpreters





Sexual orientation

We do not currently collect data on the number of tenants who are trans or non-binary. However, we have been working with a range of organisations including Learnest, Wakefield Pride, Wakefield Stripes and Stonewall. Our aim is to improve equality for the LGBTQ+ community.



68% of tenants identify as heterosexual, 7% preferred not to disclose their sexual orientation and 2% of tenants identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or 'other'.

LGBTQ+

An abbreviation to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning or other sexual and gender identities.

Celebrating Pride

Inclusivity is one of our core values. We believe an inclusive work environment benefits everyone as inclusion promotes belonging, purpose and wellbeing. We all have an individual responsibility for creating an inclusive culture within our community and being allies. An ally is someone who takes action to promote inclusivity, regardless of their own identity, which makes allyship so important in the progress of our inclusive culture.

June is global Pride Month each year and we thought it was appropriate to share the exciting Pride events that we organised during the year.

LGBTQ+ charity, Stonewall, delivered some **Allyship training sessions** for staff during August and September 2023.

The sessions helped colleagues to:

- develop an understanding of LGBTQ+ identities and experiences in order to confidently advocate for more inclusive workplaces;
- understand why LGBTQ+ inclusion at work is important and the benefits of creating a more inclusive culture on individuals and organisations;
- explore the meaning of the term ally and identify first steps that they might take to be a more active and visible ally; and
- learn why some people choose to share their pronouns.

We attended and celebrated **Wakefield Pride on Sunday 13 August** with a stall alongside our partners Yorkshire Housing and encouraged everyone to come along to support the event and visit our stall.

It was a fantastic day with hundreds of people engaging with us. We took the opportunity to find out what we could do to support the LGBTQ+ community and we got lots of ideas, which we will now review. We also had a 'colour the t shirt' competition for children with a prize for the winner that proved very popular.

"I thoroughly enjoyed watching people come together and enjoy the day. It was colourful, loud and I really enjoyed taking part in the Wakefield Pride Parade."

Tracy Tallant
Director of Organisational Development



Marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity

Cash Wise - Healthier Wealthier Wakefield Families

Through our Healthier Wealthier Wakefield Families (HWWF) partnership with Public Health, we are supporting young families across the district to make improvements in their household finances and, in turn, influence more positive health and wellbeing outcomes.

Delivered by our Cash Wise team, the HWWF project received 647 referrals during 2023/2024 and secured just under £400k of financial help for young families.

Through the HWWF project, we also engage with other support agencies and professionals across the district, providing training that highlights financial issues mutual customers may be facing, how to spot signs of financial difficulty and how to broach this conversation with customers and refer on to appropriate services. Through this partnership we are helping to strengthen the wider financial support offer within Wakefield during a time of great financial strain.



Charitable donations

Our employees donated Easter Eggs which were delivered to Airedale Foodbank to distribute to those in need throughout the district.

Each year we organise a Christmas Charity appeal to gather donations of children's toys and food.

In 2023, we raised £7,500 from employees' contributions and to help charities including:

- The Clothing Bank Brotherton
- Tiny Hands Baby Bank, South Elmsall
- Coppafeel! Breast cancer charity
- Andy's Man Club (specified to be invested in West Yorkshire)
- Chickenley Community Centre
- Airedale foodbank
- Airedale baby bank
- Wakefield Community Choir

In addition, employees also supported our Christmas appeal for Tiny Hands by supporting families across West Yorkshire to ensure many children and vulnerable adults received presents to open on Christmas morning. Employees supported by donating gifts and by buying raffle tickets which raised over £850.

We also turned a meeting room into a wrapping station and some employees used their volunteering day to come along and support by wrapping gifts for the appeal. We wrapped 80 bags of gifts, which in total was 1,200 presents!





Socioeconomic factors

Managing income

Our Cash Wise Financial Inclusion team has been supporting our Tenants and Wakefield residents with their finances and providing help to maximise income for over a decade.

We deliver a range of support over the phone and online as well as face-to-face support within community locations, our Hubs and within our customers' homes. We know that financial issues can be difficult to discuss and so we provide support where and how our customers feel most comfortable, in a private and confidential manner.

Over the last year we have:

- received over 12,000 referrals for financial support;
- helped customers secure over £3.5m of financial help from successful benefit and grant awards and utility savings; and
- helped households access over £65,000 of food support from local foodbanks to relieve acute food poverty during the cost-of-living crisis, whilst supporting local foodbanks through our Foodbank Fund.

Ready for tenancy course

We delivered this course to 93 tenants on a one-to-one basis to help them to gain the skills needed to manage their home. The course covers money management, prioritising bills and understanding the tenancy agreement.

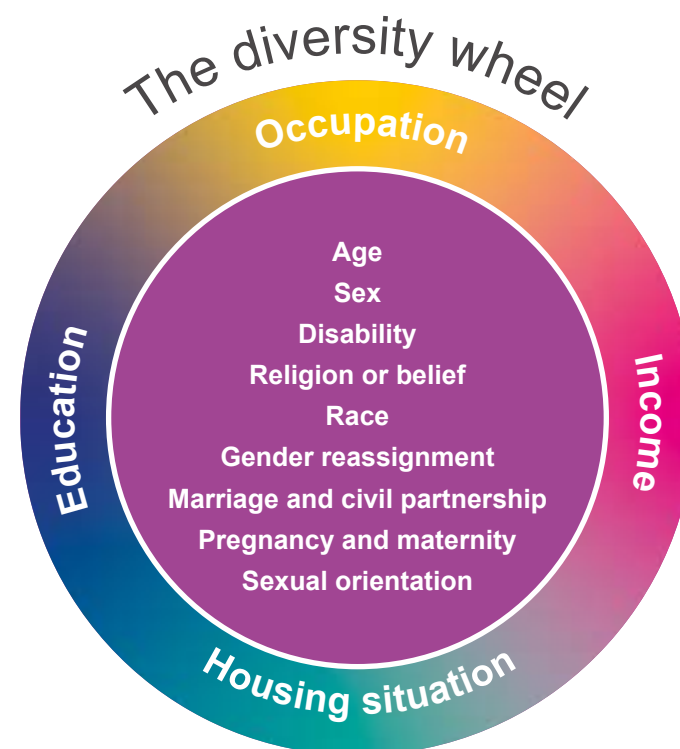
Finding employment

We have a team of Community Employment Advisors who support tenants to look for work, find a better job or a training opportunity. We help with CVs, job searches, completing application forms and interview techniques. In addition, we have a specialist advisor for self-employment, supporting tenants who want to start their own business or grow their existing business.

Training for Employment

The Training for Employment Programme helps unemployed tenants gain employability skills through a paid role for up to 12 months. The programme provides training, work experience, support and mentoring. At the end of the

programme our tenants are in a better position when applying for further employment.



Targeted engagement

We have engaged with over 350 people, provided 124 employment outcomes and 192 training outcomes.

Young tenants

Using data collected as part of our On Your Street project, we continue to target younger tenants to invite them to participate in activities which are part of our menu of opportunities.

Older people

We regularly attend and support Age UK's Silver Sunday events, where partner agencies come together to promote services for older people and signpost those in need of support.

We support groups including Simply Leisure, Senior Citizens Support Group, The Community Choir Wakefield with events and activities.

We organise inter-generational activities with schools, including inviting local schools to perform for our independent living scheme residents at Christmas, and bulb planting during spring. We supported Friends of the Hut, Airedale, to hold a consultation for over 50s to discover the services they would like to see made available locally.





Disability

We recently welcomed Crofton Darby and Joan Club as a member of Communities Together. The group is open to members of other communities and welcome people of all ages with disabilities.

We continue to work with and support Move Ahead which leases a community building from us in Outwood. The group works with people who have brain injuries.

We were able to support the charity Open Country with a grant for a power assisted barrow to enable more physically disabled people to take part in its work in parks and open spaces.

Our ILS tenants continue to show an interest in starting Tenants and Residents Associations (TARAs) We continue to offer a range of resources, including funding. This funding has helped to facilitate several community events which help residents with social isolation and age-and health-related issues. Some groups have reached out to residents unable to leave their homes, delivering afternoon teas.

We continue to support POUCH (Parents of Unique Children) to support the group as they tackle the issues faced by both children and parents and carers with a wide range of social and medical issues.

Helping homeless people

We work in partnership with Wakefield Council to help to reduce the number of people who are homeless in our community. Our Tenancy Ready Team supports homeless people to find a home. Last year , we engaged with 78 homeless applicants, completing early assessments to identify barriers to housing and provide support to overcome those barriers at an earlier stage.

Discrimination, harassment and victimisation are not tolerated in our neighbourhoods

We are committed to tackling all forms of discrimination, harassment or victimisation that are motivated by prejudice or intolerance towards others. We adopt a victim-centred approach to provide support for those who suffer hate behaviour. Support is offered within 48 hours by our dedicated Community Safety Team. We ensure that appropriate enforcement action is taken, and we work with a range of partners who help us achieve this, including Wakefield Council, West Yorkshire Police, and Victim Support.

Total Inclusion Group (TIG)

TIG is comprised of a diverse range of tenants and employees who meet on a quarterly basis. Our employee representatives work in different parts of the business such as Corporate Management Team, Organisational Development, Diversity and Inclusion, Housing, OneCall and Investment.

Together, their role is to help shape our diversity and inclusion strategies. TIG is consulted on proposed changes to services and they monitor our progress against our diversity and inclusion targets. The diversity of TIG ensures that a range of perspectives are represented.





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electronically at wdh.co.uk



This document is also available in
other formats on request.



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Wakefield and District Housing Limited

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