

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report

2022 / 2023



Equality, diversity and inclusion

Employees

Age Sex Disability Religion Race Gender reassignment Sexual orientation Marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity Diversity and inclusion

Customers¹

Age Sex Disability Religion Race Gender reassignment Sexual orientation Marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity Socioeconomic factors

Welcome

Equality, Diversity and inclusion have 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.

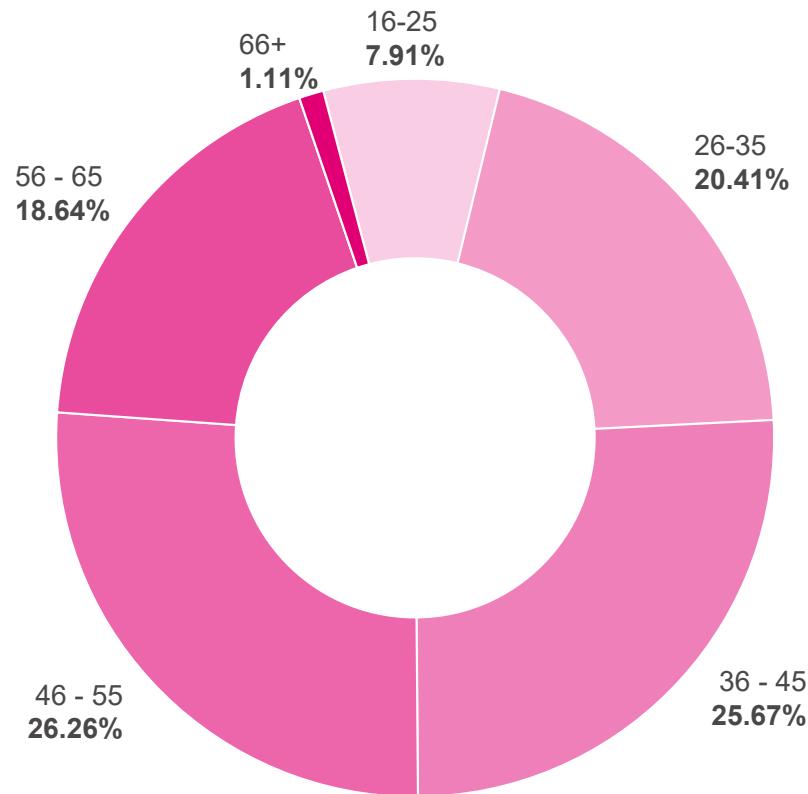
Our report presents data on the nine protected characteristics of our employees and tenants. We analyse this data to identify the under-represented groups, outline how we support them and identify what more needs to be done.

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

The aspirations 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 aspirations over the next three years and we will monitor trends towards these aspirations on a yearly basis'



Age



7.91% of our employees are aged 16 to 25, indicating that there is an under-representation of employees aged 25 and under.

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, or younger. 1.1% of our employees have chosen to work beyond the age of 66. We support all employees who choose to do this.

Strategies to increase the number of younger employees:

Graduate schemes

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

For undergraduates

Our 'WDH Graduate Placement Scheme' gives undergraduates the opportunity to complete a one-year placement with WDH. We offer a wide range of placement options for undergraduates to choose from including placements in:

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

For graduates

Our 'WDH 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 August 2022 and in April 2023 we launched our campaign to recruit six further graduate placements.

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.

"Finishing university can be a rollercoaster - all the hard work has paid off and you have achieved what you set out to do. However, deciding what's next is a challenge. Then, I came across the Graduate Trainee Scheme offered by WDH. Finally, an organisation that wanted to provide graduates with the networking, training and experience for career progression!"

After university, I still wasn't certain on what I wanted from my career. WDH has everything under one roof and the graduate role offers you the opportunity to try out different areas and make informed decisions about what you want your career to look like.

The programme has exceeded all my expectations. I have had placements in various teams including the Wellbeing Team and the Adaptations Team. Throughout the placements, I have felt very supported, I have been given lots of opportunities to discuss my future aspirations and request training and qualifications.

I already feel like I have a lot more experience in the workplace, a better understanding of where I see my career progressing and a greater knowledge of what I need to do to achieve that!"

Eleanor Wainwright
Graduate Trainee





Apprenticeships

Our Apprenticeship Scheme is well established, and it has been running for over 15 years. Apprenticeships give people, of all ages, the opportunity to train for a particular profession. Apprentices work alongside highly experienced employees and mentors, to receive on the job training. They split their time between working with us and attending an educational establishment where they study for a nationally recognised qualification.

Apprentices at WDH are supported by a wider team including our Apprentice Review Officer and Learning and Development Advisors, who ensure 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 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 and problem-solving skills. Apprentices take part in rock climbing, abseiling, gorge walking, scrambling and open water activities.

In September 2022, we recruited nine trade apprentices in Gas, Plumbing, Roofing and Bricklaying. In February 2023, we began recruiting for an additional 10 apprentices, including, Gas, Plumbing, Joinery and Electrical. Our Apprenticeship Scheme is very popular. This year we had over 250 applications.

“One of the best things about an apprentice is that it’s practical and I am constantly learning new things, which has improved my skills both in and out of work. I’ve been supported well during my apprenticeship, which has helped me to achieve and succeed. I would highly recommend an apprenticeship as you build so many new skills. WDH has a great team who are there to help you learn and improve and constantly support you.”

Ryan Pepper Bushell
Apprentice Bricklayer

Working in partnership with local schools and colleges

We have worked in partnership 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 their 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 (previously Wakefield College) to provide essential work placements as part of the new T-Level qualifications. Eight students will attend WDH for nine weeks each to meet the requirements of the qualification. Pupils will attend WDH between July 2023 and March 2024.
- 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 to apply. This includes increasing advertising our vacancies on social media platforms to help attract younger job applicants. For example, more of our vacancies are now advertised on Facebook.

Next steps

In addition to the steps already outlined, we also plan to:

- enhance our recruitment campaigns so that they attract a more diverse pool of candidates, including more younger people;
- organise several young people’s forums, where we will consult with younger employees about how best to attract, retain and develop our young workforce;
- celebrate International Youth Day to highlight the valuable contribution that young people make to the workplace; and
- sign the Age Friendly Employer Pledge to show our recognition of the importance and value of older workers. By joining this nationwide programme, we commit to improving work for older workers, taking the necessary actions to help them flourish in a multigenerational workforce. The pledge outlines certain commitments for us to follow to be more age friendly.

Current performance 2022 / 2023

- 7.9% of employees are aged 16 to 25 years old.

Aspiration 2023 / 2024

- 10% of employees to be 16 to 25 years old



Sex



We have a slightly higher percentage of men than women.

Gender Pay Gap

Our Gender Pay Gap has reduced this year to 11%.²

We have implemented multiple strategies to support female career progression and reduce our Gender Pay Gap further.

Gender Pay Gap Working Group

Over 30 male and female employees are members of the Gender Pay Gap Working Group. This year, the group created a Gender Pay Gap action plan which details a range of strategies to further reduce our Gender Pay Gap. The group is sponsored by our Chief Executive, Andy Wallhead and supported by Tracy Tallant, Director of Organisational Development.

“There are a range of factors that contribute and have an impact on an organisation’s Gender Pay Gap. Therefore, reducing the Gender Pay Gap is often a complicated task. However, our Gender Pay Gap members are fully committed to reducing our Gender Pay Gap and we have already identified numerous strategies which we are confident will have a positive impact. We meet on a regular basis and it’s clear that every one of our members is committed to gender equality.”

Kathryn McCracken
Estate Manager and Chair of the Gender Pay Gap Working Group

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

Women into Leadership Programme

Facilitated by Gemma Stow, founder of No More Hiding, this three month coaching programme aims to support our aspiring female leaders to progress in their career. A total of 18 women enrolled on the programme and 100% of all attendees reported that their confidence increased significantly as a result. In addition, one member of staff has been promoted and several attendees have successfully been awarded a range of stretch projects, such as Board Member at WISH and Joint Pillar Lead in Partnership with Wakefield Council.

“I recently attended the Women into Leadership programme with Gemma Stow. Gemma was inspirational and made all attendees welcome. She taught us tools that will help us to grow our self-confidence, change our attitudes to recognising our abilities, which in turn could help us to progress our careers.”

Anita Klassen
Senior Support Officer and Women into Leadership Programme attendee

² In 2021 our Gender Pay Gap was 11.6% and 2020 it was 13.3%.



International Women's Day

To demonstrate our commitment to the advancement of women within WDH, we organised a series of events to celebrate International Women's Day.

Employee Event

Over 200 employees joined us at our head office, to celebrate women of the past, present and future.

We hosted various talks about what we are doing to continue to break down barriers.

- **The Gender Pay Gap Working Group** talked about their work to reduce the Gender Pay Gap.
- Members of the **Women@WDH Network** talked about this staff led all-female networking group.
- Our Learning and Development Team talked about different career development opportunities, such as mentoring and the Leadership Extended Achievement Programme (LEAP).
- Members of our WorkSmart group gave advice and information on compressed hours and flexible working.

Staff took part in a quiz about globally inspiring women, enjoyed food prepared by females and listened to songs by female artists.

Inspirational Posters

Various employees volunteered to create posters to inspire our female workforce. Employees shared their photos and personal quotes, which were made into posters (see below). These posters were displayed across the organisation to inspire women and show our unwavering commitment to the advancement of women.



Podcasts

We were very excited to launch our brand-new podcasts to mark International Women's Day. Our podcasts covered:

- Addressing the balance: Taking positive action for women in senior roles. **Featuring Sarah Roxby, Service Director - Housing**
- The barriers of seeing work life through a lens: the importance of having a diverse workforce for employees and customers. **Featuring Andy Wallhead, CEO**
- What's the deal with gender pay gaps? **Featuring Kat McCracken**
- Productivity isn't attendance, calling equality out and recognising what everyone brings to the table. **Featuring Suzan Harrington, Board Member**
- Encouragement is key: Encouraging women to be self-sufficient and confident, and encouraging discussion where we can be more equitable to overcome adversity. **Featuring Shendi Keshet, Board Member**

If you would like to listen to our podcasts, please visit our [SoundCloud page](#).

Raising Awareness of the Global International Women's Day Theme

Every year we raise awareness of the global International Women's Day theme. This year, the theme was 'Embrace Equity.' We asked colleagues to embrace the equity pose to show solidarity and demonstrate how collectively we can make real change. Several of our employees, including all members of the Corporate Management Team (CMT), chose to support this year's theme by submitting photos of themselves in the #EmbraceEquity pose. We were proud to support this and to remind people that we believe in, and are dedicated to, gender equality.





Women@WDH Network

Currently our largest staff-lead networking group, with 69 members, this all-female networking group meets monthly to discuss a range of topics. The group enjoys discussing female career progression and often brings in guests to share their lived experience about their career journey and successes.

"I am proud to be the chairperson for Women@WDH. The role has pushed me to come out of my comfort zone and put myself forward and to speak up. I have made new contacts and met a lot of new people within the organisation. It has highlighted to me that everyone has barriers to overcome."

Ruth Walters
Project Officer and Chair of Women@WDH Networking Group

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.
- 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 teams

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. In response to these findings, we launched a resource project group (which is made up of staff from across the organisation, including Human Resources, Recruitment and Technical Services) to develop a Technical Services Recruitment Plan. The plan details multiple strategies to attract a more diverse pool of candidates to apply for roles within Technical Services.

Family friendly policies and procedures

We are proud to be a family friendly organisation. We have a range of policies and procedures, that are designed to support those with caring and childcare responsibilities, including:

- **WorkSmart**
WorkSmart means that work takes place at the most effective locations and at the most effective times to meet customer expectations. WorkSmart gives employees working at all levels more choice of where and when they work, subject to their job role and business considerations. Feedback from women working for us has indicated that this flexibility is beneficial for women with childcare or caring responsibilities. For more information about WorkSmart, please see our [Marriage and Civil Partnership and Pregnancy an Maternity page](#).
- **Flexible Working**
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 WDH. This is to support WDH in terms of retention of employees by offering a better work-life balance whilst meeting business needs. It should also help reduce our Gender Pay Gap as women generally have more caring responsibilities outside of work than men. In October 2022, we formally relaunched our Flexible Working Policy and we particularly promoted the option of compressed hours to employees. Since then, over 10% of employees have chosen to work compressed hours.

"I was keen to take advantage of compressed hours as my husband has recently started working 3 days a week and we have caring responsibilities for my mother. This has enabled us to have more free time together to do the things we enjoy and to plan my mother's appointments around my extra day off. It also provides the opportunity to provide additional support out of normal office hours to the business."

Paula Norton
Health and Safety Manager

- **Enhanced maternity pay and enhanced adoption pay**, which is paid by WDH in addition to statutory payments.
- **Paid leave for antenatal appointments.**
- **Shared parental leave**, giving employees and their partners the flexibility to share their full entitlement of maternity and paternity leave and pay.
- **Annual leave purchase scheme**, giving our employees the opportunity to purchase an additional five days annual leave that can be used to spend more time with partners, families and children.

For more information about our family friendly approach, please see [Marriage and Civil Partnership and Pregnancy an Maternity](#).

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.



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 hosted two menopause awareness workshops which were delivered by People Asset Management (PAM), our occupational health provider. The sessions aimed to help people understand how to best support their female colleagues and the benefits to this in the workplace. The sessions were promoted to and attended by male and female colleagues and managers.

International Men’s Day

We were keen to support and raise awareness of International Men’s Day which is held annually on 19 November.

This year we organised a calendar of events to support men’s health including sessions by:

Andy’s Man Club, where attendees learnt more about this peer-to-peer support group.

Domestic Abuse Service, where attendees learnt about the prevalence of domestic abuse suffered by men. The session also covered types of abuse, challenges, myths, government action, support and resources available.

Back Care Awareness, led by a qualified physiotherapist. Attendees learnt how to care for their back.

State of Mind Mental Health Fitness, facilitated by ex rugby players, the facilitators shared their personal lived experience of mental health issues to raise awareness of men’s mental health and the importance of seeking support.

Next steps

In addition to these initiatives, we also plan to:

- engage with our female employees through surveys and focus groups to help us to identify and address the barriers that our female employees may experience;
- source and develop partnerships with organisations who support women in the work place, for example Women In Social Housing (WISH) the national networking community for women working in social housing;
- explore and implement health and wellbeing initiatives, specifically aimed at women; and
- begin to implement the strategies identified in the Technical Services Recruitment Plan.

Current performance 2022 / 2023

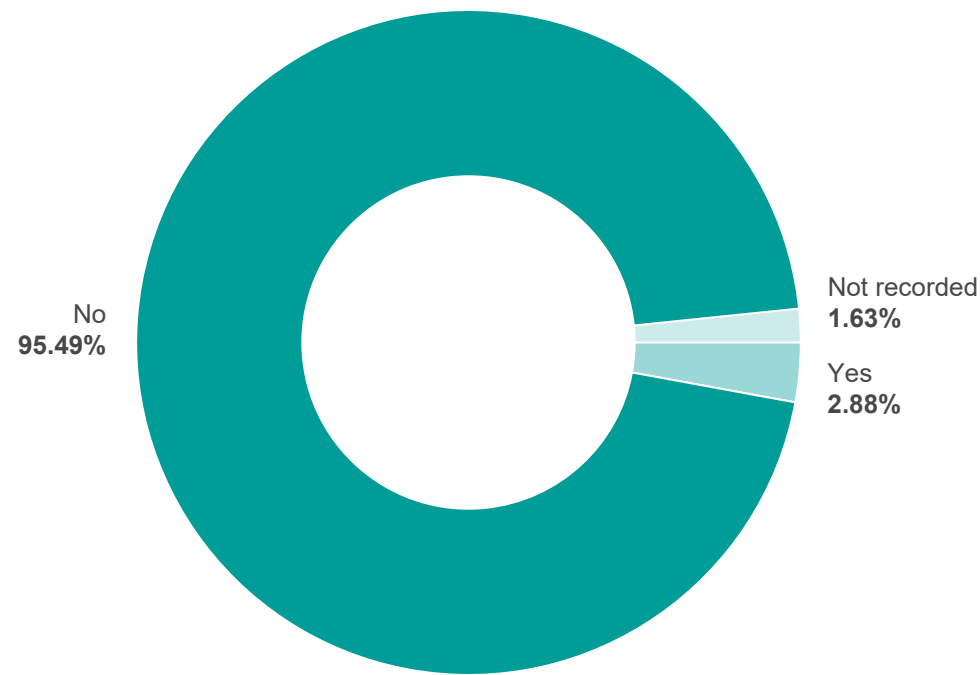
- 46.75% of all employees are women.
- 44.5% of all Business Leaders and above are women.
- 40% of the Corporate Management Team are women.
- 40% of all Board members are women.

Aspiration 2023 / 2024

- 47% of all employees to be women.
- 47% of all Business Leaders and above to be women.
- 47% of the Corporate Management Team to be women.
- 47% of all Board members to be women.



Disability



2.88% of our workforce have told us that they have a 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 who have disabilities and health conditions

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

- asking all new employees if they need reasonable adjustments to their work environment and implementing all reasonable adjustments;
- working with trained occupational therapists, which helps us to better understand the individual needs of our employees;
- having accessible buildings - all of our buildings are wheelchair accessible and have hearing loops;
- 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.

Mental health and wellbeing support

Wellbeing Champions

Our Wellbeing Champions provide support and independent advice on wellbeing matters. All our Wellbeing Champions have received training through Mental Health First Aid England (MHFAE) to spot the symptoms of mental health issues, offer initial help and guide people towards the most appropriate support. Our employees can speak to the Wellbeing Champions, in person, over the telephone or by video call. We have 28 active Wellbeing Champions around the organisation.

Health and wellbeing calendar

We have further developed our health and wellbeing calendar which has helped us to raise more awareness and understanding around health and wellbeing. We organise activities to raise awareness of a range of health and wellbeing matters including:

- offering staff free blood pressure checks for stress awareness month;
- arranging information sessions about prostate cancer for Prostrate Cancer Awareness Month; and
- took part in the Macmillan's World's Biggest Coffee Morning by organising a coffee morning for employees where we raised over £200 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

"Now that employees are returning to the workplace, part of the Wellbeing Champions' objectives is to raise the awareness of the work and resources we provide. We aim to make every employee aware that they can speak to a Wellbeing Champion when they need to."

Neil Hemmingway
HR Business Partner and Wellbeing Champion Programme Coordinator



Disability History Month

This year the national theme for Disability History Month was health and wellbeing. We were keen to highlight the wide selection of wellbeing support available and remind employees that they have a choice in how they receive wellbeing support, including face-to-face, over the telephone, over video link, over text or even an app. We invited a host of organisations to come and speak to staff, including Andy’s Man Club, Live Well Wakefield, Man Matters, Catch a Falling Star and Blind Veterans UK. Over 50 employees came to hear about the wellbeing support that is available for themselves, their families and friends.

Check In campaign

We have joined the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health and Care Partnership’s ‘Check In’ campaign. The campaign aims to promote a wellbeing culture by normalising conversations around suicide and mental health. We also have an e-learning module on this.

Training

We offer a range of training courses to raise awareness about disabilities, long-term health conditions and neurodiversity. These are shown below:

| Training | Provider | Number attended (in 2022 / 2023) |
|---|--|----------------------------------|
| Neurodiversity and Autism Awareness Workshop | Specialist Autism Services | 18 |
| Trauma-led Practice Workshop | NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board | 105 |
| Dementia Awareness | Internal | 4 |
| Wellbeing and Coaching event | External Seminar | 2 |
| Mental Health First Aid | External Provider | 2 |
| Dementia Awareness: become a dementia friend | Internal | 17 |
| Suicide Prevention and Reduction Strategies | External Seminar | 1 |
| The Supporting Disabled People in the Workplace | External Seminar | 1 |

Employee Assistance Programme

We offer all employees free access to our Employee Assistance Programme. The confidential helpline is open 24 hours a day, everyday to help employees deal with any personal problems that are negatively impacting on their health and wellbeing. Calls are answered by experienced counsellors, legal and financial specialists, who provide advice, support and signposting.

Disability Job Fair

We attended Wakefield Job Centre’s Disability Confident Job Fair, to promote WDH as an employer of choice. We spoke to over 20 attendees about our Disability Confident status and our commitment to recruiting, retaining and developing employees with disabilities and long-term health conditions.



Next steps

In addition to the steps outlined above, we also plan to:

- coordinate an Accessibility Forum so that employees can tell us how we can make our workplace more accessible for everyone;
- review the accessibility of all our corporate buildings, as part of our Facilities Team Plan;
- provide a further 20 new electric riser desks in our offices;
- identify further strategies to support employees who are neurodivergent;
- review our recruitment practices to ensure that our job vacancies attract a diverse pool of candidates, including people with disabilities;
- expand our planned activities around Mental Health week, with the aim of removing some of the potential stigma surrounding mental health;
- explore and implement an increased offer of health and wellbeing initiatives for staff; and
- expand the activities linked to the Check In campaign, to normalise conversations around mental health.

Current performance 2022 / 2023

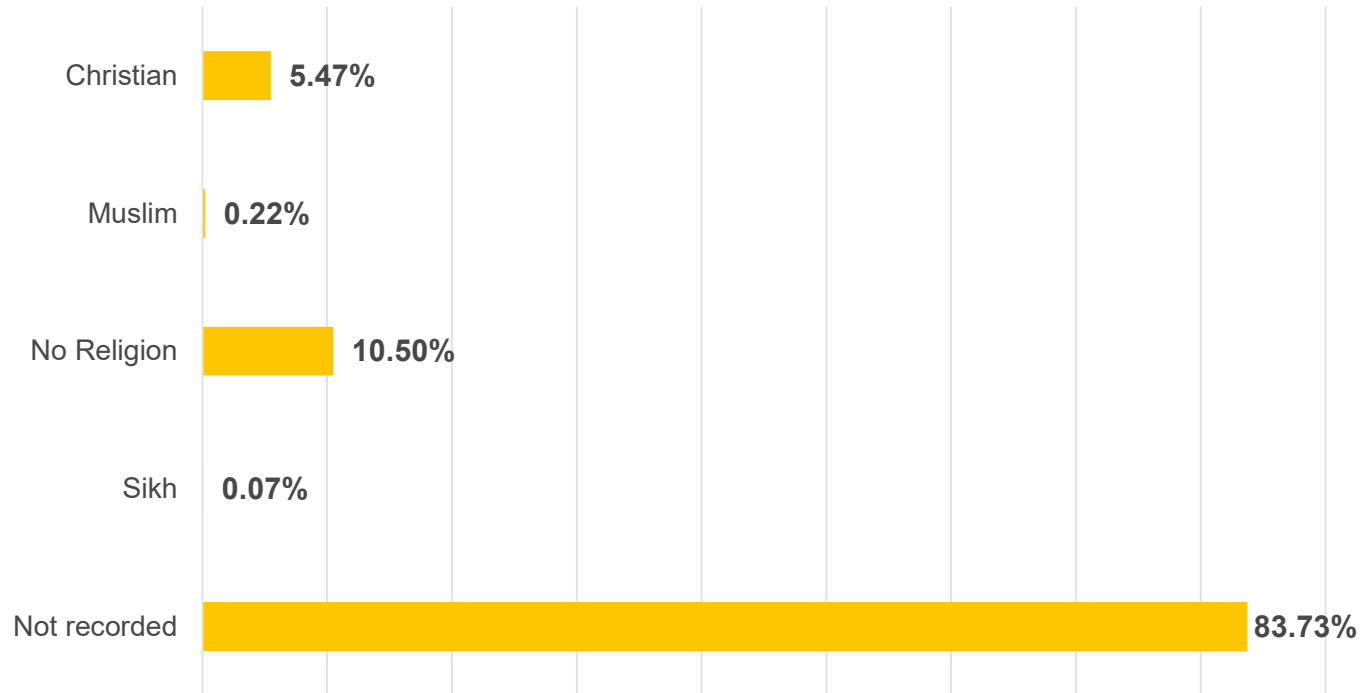
- 2.93 % of our workforce have told us that they have a disability.

Aspiration 2023 / 2024

- 5% of employees to tell us that they have a disability or a long-term health condition.



Religion

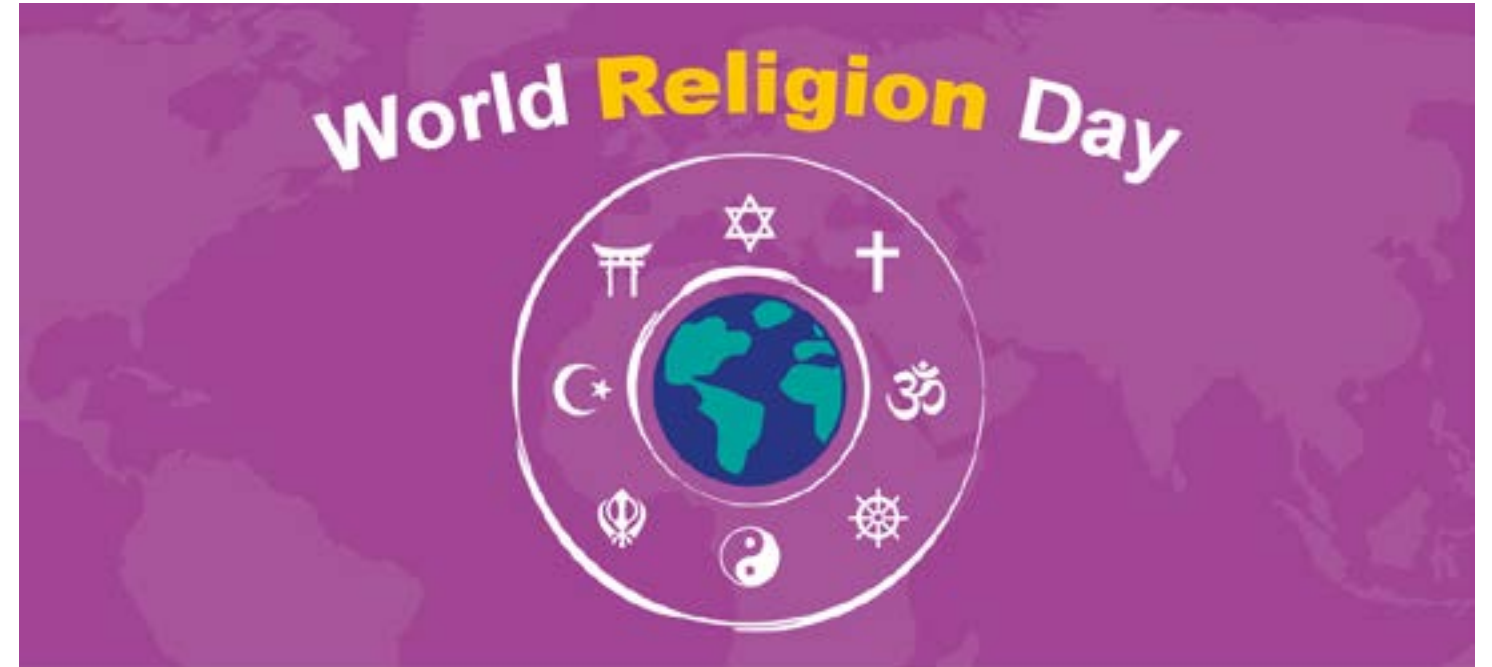


Our data show that 10.50% of our employees have ‘no religion, 5.47% of our employees are Christian, 0.22% are Muslim and 0.07% are Sikh.

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:

- ensuring that our Dress Code Policy supports people to wear their religious dress;
- giving employees the right to request flexible or home working for religious or belief reasons;
- being considerate when our employees make annual leave requests for religious or belief reasons;
- having prayer rooms in our head office, which enables employees to pray during their working day;
- raising awareness about different religious festivals, for example by celebrating World Religion Day; and
- raising awareness of different awareness days, such as International Holocaust Remembrance Day.



World Religion Day

World Religion Day is celebrated annually on 15 January. This year, we informed employees about Islam, including the origin, the Five Pillars and important festivals, such as Ramadan and Eid.

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

“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.”

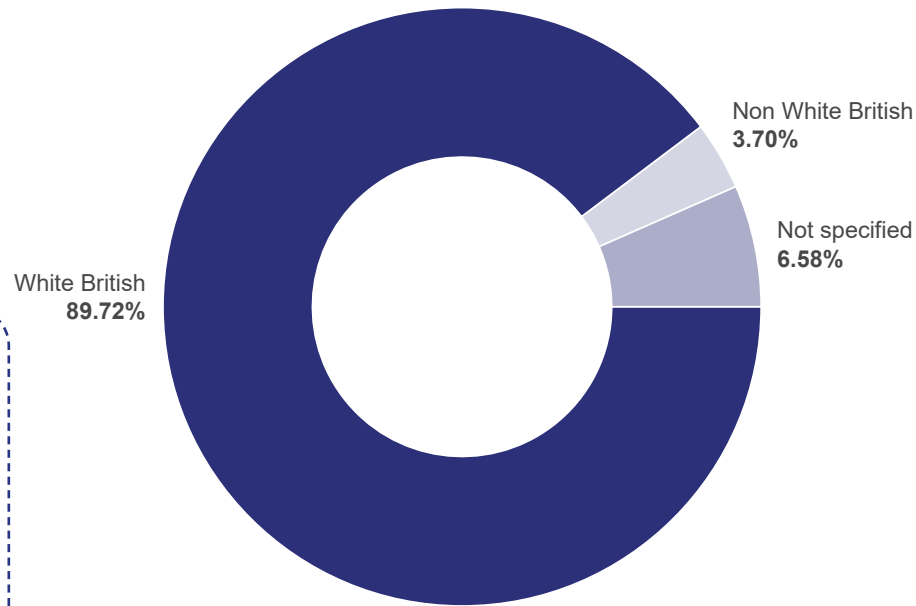
Umera Hussain
Homesearch Support Officer



Race

89.72% of our employees describe themselves as White British.

Our Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority employees make up 3.70% 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.



Black History Month

Over 200 employees came together to celebrate Black History Month. We tried a menu of traditional Jamaican food and employees had the opportunity to play a range of traditional instruments. Wakefield Music Education Hub attended our event and gave employees a quick tutorial and an opportunity to sample a variety of African percussion instruments including Dundun and Djembe drums, Cow Bells and Shekere Shakers. Some employees even took things a little further by learning cyclic African rhythms from Ghana and played a piece together as a group.

"It was a lovely positive event and a privilege to share a more diverse aspect of music with the great WDH team. It was impressive to see some of the employees reveal their hidden musical talents!"

Phil Needham
Principal of Wakefield Music Education Hub

Black History Month is where we come together to celebrate the positive role of Black people in shaping our communities. Promoting knowledge and understanding of Black history and culture and celebrating the contributions Black people have made.

To demonstrate our commitment to achieving racial equality, we:

- follow the Race at Work Charter framework, which offers guidance on how to address the barriers that ethnic minority people face in the workplace. This year during Black History Month, our Chief Executive announced that he would be the Executive Sponsor for the Race at Work Charter;
- have designated seats on our Employee Voice group which are reserved for ethnic minority employees. Currently 10% of our Employee Voice group identify as ethnic minorities. The Employee Voice group is consulted on a range of business matters, giving employees the opportunity to share their views on proposals;
- monitor the number of ethnic minorities that take up career development opportunities to ensure that there is proportionate representation of ethnic minorities in initiatives, such as LEAP (our Leadership Extended Achievement Programme), succession planning and mentoring;
- regularly review our Dress Code Policy to ensure that it allows people the opportunity to wear their cultural dress at work; and
- celebrate events which positively promote racial diversity, such as Black History Month.



- pledged our support to the anti-racism movement Root Out Racism, which aims to proactively challenge racism across all aspects of society. It encourages people to stand up against racism and to better inform themselves about anti-racist behaviours;



Next steps

In addition to the steps outlined above, we also plan to:

- produce an ethnicity pay gap report to identify if there are any differences in average pay between all white British employees and all employees from ethnic minority backgrounds. If an ethnicity gap is found, we will also produce a detailed action plan to address the pay gap;
- introduce a race and ethnicity employee network, which will enable employees to meet on a regular basis to discuss and provide their insights on pertinent issues, such as racial equality, and the ethnicity pay gap;
- promote the Race at Work Charter and Root Out Racism in our recruitment campaigns, to show potential candidates that we are dedicated to racial equality;
- Have an increased focus on the Race at Work Charter, working towards achieving the steps set out in the framework; and
- expand the number of events that we celebrate to raise awareness of racial, cultural and ethnic diversity, for example by celebrating World Day for Cultural Diversity.

Current performance 2022 / 2023

- 3.70% of employees describe themselves as ethnic minorities.

Aspiration 2023 / 2024

- 10% of employees to be from an ethnic minority group.



Gender reassignment

We have started to collect data on the number of employees who are trans or non-binary. However, we are in the early stages of this process and so we do not have this data to share yet. We are currently in the process of 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.

Sharing personal pronouns

We have given our employees the option of adding their personal pronouns to their email signature. So far, our Corporate Management Team and Organisational Development Team have received training on the power of sharing personal pronouns. Following the training, over one quarter of employees chose to add their personal pronouns to their email signature. This training will be offered to all staff by the end of 2023.

Why are we giving employees the option of adding their personal pronouns to their email signature?

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 are giving 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. 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 your personal pronouns to your email signature is an act of allyship to the trans and non-binary community and the wider LGBTQ+ community. Adding your 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.

Transgender and Gender Reassignment Equality Policy

We are currently reviewing our Transgender and Gender Reassignment Equality Policy, which supports employees who wish to, or have, reassigned their gender.

Working with LGBTQ+ Specialist Organisations

We have been consulting with a range of LGBTQ+ specialist organisations including Leamest, and Wakefield Stripes to identify further steps to create a more inclusive workplace for the LGBTQ+ community.

We donated £500 towards the running costs of Wakefield Pride.

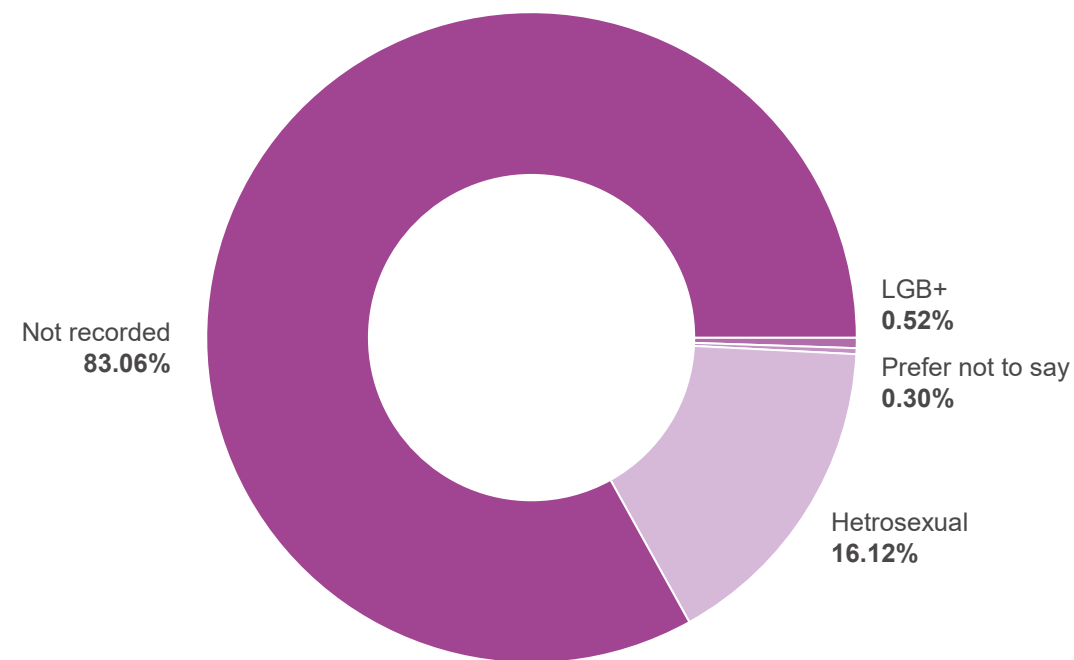
“Wakefield Pride 2022 was a fantastic celebration of our LGBTQ+ community. The event proved a great opportunity for WDH to hear from and learn how we can support the LGBTQ+ community. Several suggestions were received from people visiting the event, Pride is for everyone! This event is now a highlight of the engagement calendar.”

Jill Ambler,
Community Development Officer

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

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.

Sexual orientation



We recognise that we still have missing data on our employees’ sexual orientation. 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 sexual orientation. This will be implemented in 2024 and it will help us to better understand the profile of our workforce.

The data that we hold shows that 16.12% of our employees have told us they are heterosexual and 0.52% of employees have told us they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or other.

To show our support to the LGBTQ+ community, our employees attended Wakefield Pride in 2022. We held a stall at Pride to promote the services that we provide, and we hosted fun competitions and giveaways. Over the day, we engaged with over 150 attendees. We consulted with Pride attendees, asking them “If you could name one thing that WDH could do for the LGBTQ+ community, what would it be?”

Over 50 people responded. We carefully analysed the responses and we have begun implementing some of the suggestions, including more gender neutral toilets in our workplaces. We are looking forward to attending Wakefield Pride again this year!

Next steps

In addition to the steps outlined above, we will:

- consult with employees to see how we could make the workplace more inclusive for the LGBTQ+ community;
- offer allyship training to staff, so that they can learn about being an LGBTQ+ ally ³;
- give every member of staff the option of adding their personal pronoun to their email signature, whilst communicating the rationale of this clearly; and
- launch the option of staff wearing a rainbow lanyard, which is a visible sign of LGBTQ+ acceptance and inclusivity.

| Current performance 2022 / 2023 | Aspiration 2023 / 2024 |
|---|--|
| • 0.52% of employees have told us that they identify as LGB+. | • 3.2% of employees to tell us that they are LGB+. |

³ 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.



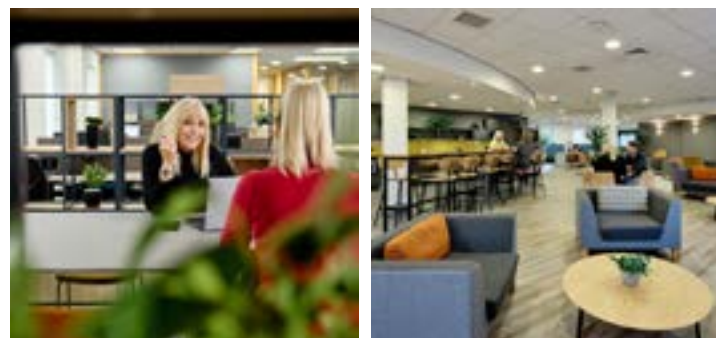
Marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity

We are a family-friendly organisation and to support employees who have partners and families, we offer:

- enhanced maternity and adoption pay, which is paid by WDH in addition to statutory payments;
- paid leave for antenatal appointments;
- additional paternity leave;
- shared parental leave, giving employees and their partners the flexibility to share their full entitlement of maternity and paternity leave and pay;
- the right for all employees to request flexible working at any point of their employment;
- parental leave where eligible employees can take unpaid leave to spend more time with their child(ren);
- an annual leave purchase scheme, giving our employees the opportunity to buy an additional five days annual leave that can be used to spend more time with partners, families and children; and
- opportunities for career breaks - We offer the opportunity for employees to take temporary unpaid leave through supporting extended time away from work.

WorkSmart

We have embraced a new WorkSmart / hybrid approach to working since the pandemic. This has empowered employees to flex where and how they work. 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. A WorkSmart project group has been set up to monitor and communicate hybrid initiatives and to continually review the policy and how to improve things for the benefit of customers and employees.

Flexible Working

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 WDH. 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 we promoted compressed hours over 10% of employees have moved onto this work pattern.

International Day of Families

We were keen to mark this special day and we asked our employees to send in photos of their families with a paragraph about why their family is important to them. We received several heartwarming photos and comments.

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.



“The range of family friendly benefits offered by WDH is now better than ever and the flexibility is great. My youngest is still at high school and we are invited in to end of year celebrations and information sessions about GCSEs, I’m really glad that I can attend all of these events and I know I have my manager’s support to do this. In a couple of years’ time when she’s at college there won’t be events like this to go to so I’m making the most of it. On a Wednesday I can also make sure I can start work a bit earlier and finish a little earlier to take her to her theatre group which she loves, and I love watching the productions. I considered applying for compressed hours but the flexibility we are offered anyway makes me feel like I have the best of both worlds, and when work needs me to start early to meet suppliers on site well I’m more than happy to do it in return. It just means I can be both a committed and loyal employee as well as doing everything I need to as a Mum.”

Next steps

In addition to the steps outlined above, we will:

- Introduce a new employee self-serve tool, which will enable each employee to report if they have caring responsibilities. This will be implemented in 2024 and it will help us to better understand the profile of our workforce.



Diversity and inclusion

We have implemented the following strategies to further embed diversity and inclusion within WDH:

- We launched our #ProudToBeMe hashtag, which aims to encourage people to embrace their uniqueness. The hashtag is displayed on all employees' email signatures as a reminder to everyone to be themselves. We plan to expand the #ProudToBeMe campaign internally throughout WDH.
- We have diversified where we advertise our vacancies to ensure that we attract a diverse pool of candidates to apply for our job vacancies. We are utilising social media more, such as LinkedIn. We also advertise on diversity specialist websites including: the Diversity Job Board network, LGBTjobs.co.uk, BMEjobs.co.uk, Disabilityjob.co.uk and WISH (the national networking community for women working in social housing).
- We are a member of the Housing Diversity Network (HDN) and we receive their expert advice on a range of matters to ensure we are at the forefront of diversity and inclusion.

Housing Diversity Network is a social enterprise that works to support organisations to improve how they address inequalities.

- We are active members of Wakefield Place, a networking group for local public sector employers such as Wakefield Council and West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership. We meet monthly to discuss how we can improve diversity and inclusion within our workforces.
- We have recruited a full-time Diversity and Inclusion Business Partner whose role is dedicated to improving the equality, diversity and inclusion within our workforce.

- We have a Total Inclusion Group (TIG) who help shape our diversity and inclusion strategies. TIG meet every three months to evaluate our strategies and review how we are progressing against our diversity and inclusion aspirational targets. The group comprises of a diverse range of employees and tenants, which ensures a range of perspectives are represented.
- Seven employees volunteered to become diversity and inclusion champions. As champions, they promote diversity and inclusion throughout the workplace and community.
- Every new employee attends equality and diversity training as part of their induction. This ensures that all new employees are aware of the importance of to diversity and inclusion.
- All employees complete equality and diversity e-learning and every three years employees complete a refresher e-learning module. This ensures that diversity and inclusion knowledge is kept up to date.
- We conduct masked recruitment, which means personal identifiers, such as the applicant's name and disability status, are removed from application forms. This helps prevent unconscious bias during shortlisting and ensures a diverse range of candidates are shortlisted to attend our interviews.
- Interview panel members receive training on effective recruitment and unconscious bias. This helps prevent the panel members from making decisions based on an unconscious bias.
- We conduct Equality Assessments to ensure any changes to our policies, procedures and processes do not impact negatively on any protected characteristic.
- We have an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, which every employee must be familiar with and comply with.
- Our Dignity at Work Guidance clearly states we take a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, bullying and harassment. We view this type of behaviour as a serious disciplinary offence, which can lead to dismissal.
- Every quarter, we produce a diversity and inclusion scorecard which allows us to monitor our progress against our diversity and inclusion aspirational targets.
- We recognise the importance of having a diverse Board, therefore we have actively recruited more women and more people who identify as ethnic minority to the Board.

Next steps

In addition to the steps outlined above, we will:

- launch the #ProudToBeMe podcasts, where guests will talk about their background, their journey and why they are proud to be themselves;
- ensure that each member of CMT⁴ sponsors a protected characteristic, to ensure that marginalised groups and intersectionality are considered when executive decisions are made; and
- redesign our diversity and inclusion e-learning, based on employee feedback, we will redesign the module so that it is more interactive.

Diversity and inclusion in procurement

We operate an 'open' quote and tendering route to market (where applicable), which encourages a wide range of organisations to bid. The successful suppliers will then enter an agreement with us, which means that they will be contractually bound to abide by the Equality Act (2010) and they will also be required to sign the WDH Contractor Minimum Standards Charter. As part of this Charter there is a specific requirement for suppliers to:

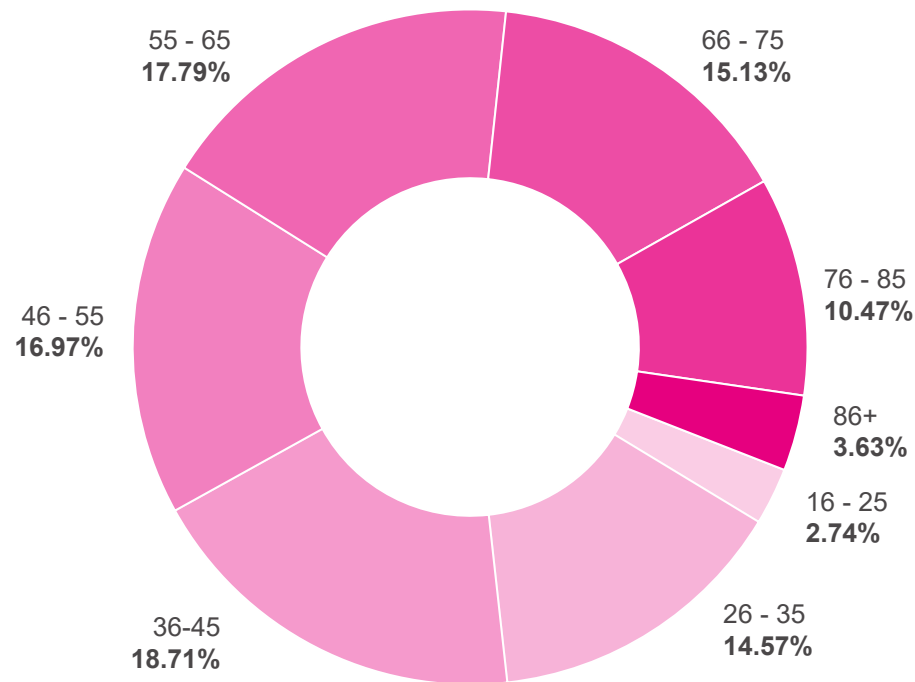
- operate a fair and open recruitment and selection process and encourage applications from all groups in the community;
- value and respect the identity and culture of everyone;
- ensure equality of pay for the workforce;
- promote fair and ethical trading; and
- work with schools and colleges, offering work experience and business awareness to students, especially those from disadvantaged areas and communities.

"It's important to me that we are a truly inclusive organisation and fully embrace the benefits that having a diverse workforce brings. We should all do whatever we can to support all aspects of diversity, in order to ensure everyone feels welcome at WDH. All colleagues should be able to be themselves at work and, through this wider diversity of lived experience and thought, we will become a stronger organisation, more reflective of the communities we represent and able to make better decisions to support them."

Martyn Shaw
Deputy Chief Executive



Age



2.74% of tenants are aged 16 to 25, meaning we have an underrepresentation of younger tenants.



Supporting younger people

We ensure that young people have access to a safe and secure home. We let our properties to people who are aged 17 or over. Young people who are 'looked after' or owed a statutory duty by the Council, can also become tenants from the age of 16.

In addition, we offer our young people a range of opportunities to develop their skills and employability in a variety of ways:

- We delivered our Community Leadership Programme, where we took 60 young people, from various local schools to the Outward Bound Centre. During this residential trip, the young people took part in activities specially designed to improve their communication, teamwork and resilience. The programme ultimately helps young people to realise that they can succeed. The programme has been delivered every year⁵ since 2006, helping over 1,500 young people develop the skills that are so important for them as they move into employment.
- We joint funded four separate Branching Out Programmes - a programme specially designed to support young people who are facing barriers

to achieving their potential. The programme was delivered by Wakefield Youth Services, and joint funded by WDH and Healthy Happy Holidays. This partnership working meant that we could double the amount of support we have been able to give previously, helping a total 60 young people (2021 / 2022 Branching Out Programme helped 24 young people). The young people participated in a variety of experiences aimed at improving their employability skills.

- We offer work experience across our teams. This may be a young person looking for their first insight into the world of work, or someone that has been out of work for some time, looking for experience to bolster their CV.

"The work experience exceeded my expectations and it helped me narrow down my future career choices.

A week on placement with WDH gave me a good insight into the work they do, not only in the repairs and maintenance team that I worked in, but the organisation as a whole.

I would recommend anyone who has the chance to get a work experience placement at WDH to do so."

Tauseef
Work Experience Student

Supporting older people

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

Adaptations

Our Adaptations Team provides assessments for minor adaptations in tenants' homes. These adaptations make it safer to move around their home and carry out every day 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 2022 / 2023, our Adaptations Team processed 2,497 adaptation referrals and received 725 health and medical rehousing requests.

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 14,870 customers. In 2022 / 2023, we received 294,969 alarm calls.



Independent living

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 (ILSs) or extra care schemes, which are located throughout the Wakefield district. ILS refers to 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 also assist residents to arrange a variety of social activities to encourage social inclusion.

Extra care offers the same facilities as our traditional ILSs. 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 35 ILSs across the district, two of which are extra care schemes. Our ILSs are home to 1,591 residents, with 245 new tenants joining us in 2022 / 2023.

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 **64** sessions were delivered across **nine** different Independent Living Schemes (ILSs) and **two** Extra Care Schemes 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 3,289 social activities across our ILS, with 32,991 attendances recorded. Each week across our ILS we deliver over 60 social activities, which include, bingo, coffee mornings, and arts and craft sessions.



"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

Events for older people:

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

- In the run up to Christmas, we visited our older tenants homes across Ossett and Kinsley as part of our Engagement Reconnection Roadshow.⁸
- We delivered several Christmas events at our ILS's across the district.
- Working in partnership with AgeUK we delivered engagement events at two bungalow schemes in Knottingley. We promoted the range of services that we offer to support our tenants.
- In partnership with Wakefield Council's Adult Education Service, we arranged taster craft sessions for tenants in Airedale and Outwood.
- We met with several residents across the district to discuss creating new tenants' groups, including a tenants group at Bembridge Court Independent Living Scheme Gill Sike Bungalows, Wakefield, and at Newfield House Independent Living Scheme, Normanton.
- We also organised intergenerational events to prevent social isolation with older people.

⁸ Our Reconnection Roadshow visits areas where we have the lowest engagement rate with the aim of engaging with the tenants and the communities in these areas.



Sex



Over 60.95% of our tenants are women, compared to under 39.05% of tenants who are men. These figures reflect the profile of our Homesearch applicants where 63.33% are female and 36.67% are male.

We support both men and women with a range of pertinent issues.

Women

Empowering women

We celebrate International Women's Day every year. This year we engaged with the campaign on social media to demonstrate to our customers our unwavering commitment to gender equality.



International Women's Day is held annually on 8 March. This global day celebrates the countless achievements of women and recognises the challenges that women face.

Raising awareness of the global International Women's Day theme

Every year we raise awareness of the global International Women's Day theme. This year, the theme was 'Embrace Equity.' We asked colleagues to embrace the equity pose to show solidarity and demonstrate how collectively we can make real change. Several of our employees, including all members of the CMT, chose to support this year's theme by submitting photos of themselves in the #EmbraceEquity pose. These photos were posted on our social media pages. We were proud to support this and to remind people that we believe in, and are dedicated to, gender equality.



WDH's own International Women's Day podcasts

We were very excited to launch our brand-new podcasts to mark International Women's Day. Our podcasts covered:

- Addressing the balance: Taking positive action for women in senior roles. **Featuring Sarah Roxby, Service Director - Housing**
- The barriers of seeing work life through a lens: the importance of having a diverse workforce for employees and customers. **Featuring Andy Wallhead, CEO**
- What's the deal with gender pay gaps? **Featuring Kat McCracken**

If you would like to listen to our podcasts, then please visit our [SoundCloud page](#).

Inspirational Posters

Various employees volunteered to create inspirational posters to inspire our female workforce. Employees shared their photos and personal quotes, which were made into posters (see right). These posters were displayed on social media to inspire women and show our unwavering commitment to the advancement of women.

For more information about how we celebrated international women's day, [click here](#).



Ending domestic violence against women



We are part of the White Ribbon Campaign and work in partnership with Wakefield Council and West Yorkshire Police to stand against domestic

abuse. The campaign raises awareness of all forms of domestic abuse and the support available.

It is a global movement to end men's violence against women.

"I am very pleased to be an Ambassador for the White Ribbon campaign and continue to promote the message of never using, excusing or remaining silent about men's violence against women. Although anyone can be a victim of domestic violence, it is recognised that most violence against women is perpetrated by men."

Gary Lumb
Community Safety Manager

We also raised awareness of the campaign on national White Ribbon Day, which is held annually on 25 November.

We are members of the Wakefield Domestic Abuse Management Board and we attend Wakefield Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). This is a multi-agency approach; we work in collaboration with other organisations to create a support plan for high risk domestic abuse cases. The primary focus of the MARAC is to safeguard the adult victim, safeguard children and manage the behaviour of perpetrators.

Men

Supporting men's mental health

Men are statistically less likely to seek mental health support than women. We want to change this and we encourage men to engage with mental health support services. We have referred several tenants to Andy's Man Club (a talking club for men), and Man Matters. This year we also donated £500 to help with the financial running of Andy's Man Club.

Resident engagement

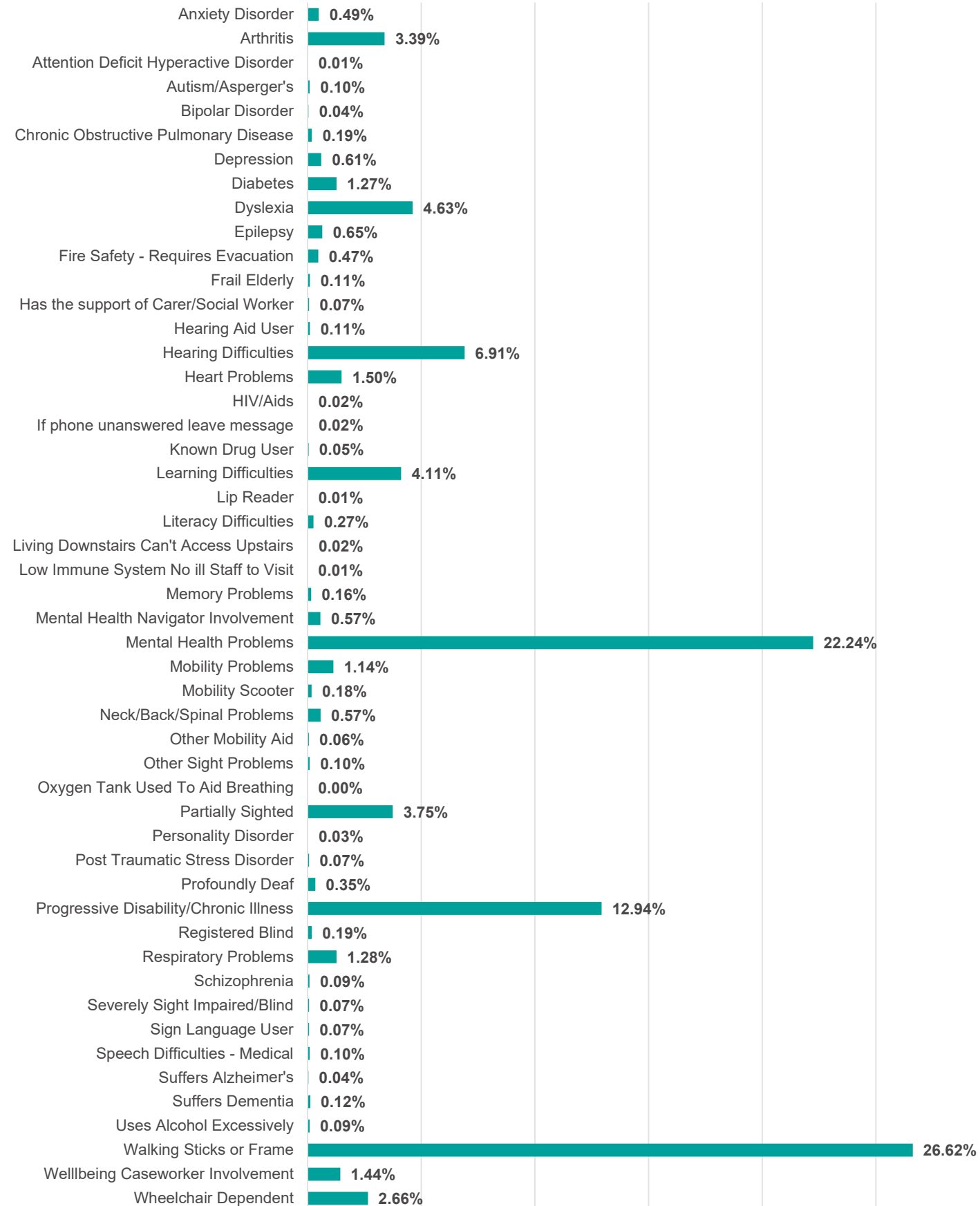
We strive for proportional representation in all customer engagement, involvement and scrutiny.

This ensures that our input from customers is reflective of our customer demographic. 60.95% of our customers are female and 39.05% of our customers are male.

Therefore, our aim is for 60.95% of our engagement to be with female customers and 39.05% of our engagement to be with male customers.



Disability



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 to move around their home and carry out every day 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 2022 / 2023, our Adaptations Team processed 2,497 adaptation referrals and received 725 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 14,870 customers. In 2022 / 2023, we received 294,969 alarm calls.



Supporting hospital discharge

We have hospital housing coordinators who work at Fieldhead and Pinderfields Hospitals. The housing coordinators support inpatients who are experiencing housing related barriers to discharge. The housing coordinator will help to address these barriers, helping the patient have a timely discharge from hospital. Pinderfields and Fieldhead housing co-ordinators received 182 new referrals into the service in 2022 / 2023.

Communication needs

We are committed to clear communication and we use clear English when communicating with our tenants. Clear English is a way of writing clearly and concisely so that people reading the information can understand it easily.

Tenants can request information in a variety of formats. These include: large print, audio format, MP3 files, and braille. We also have portable induction loops for meetings and visits. These help support our tenants who have visual and / or hearing difficulties. We use a text relay service for people who are deaf or who are unable to speak on the phone. This displays the conversation as text on their phone screen. We can also email and send text messages where required.

We have additional communication support for our Homesearch members.

To remove potential barriers in expressing an interest in living in one of our properties, our Homesearch members can express their interest in a variety of ways, including: in person at one of our Hubs, phoning Homesearch / OneCALL; online; or by text message.

In addition, we offer an assisted bidding service for Homesearch members who need extra support when expressing an interest in properties. An employee will bid on the properties, on behalf of the Homesearch member. Currently, we are supporting 44 Homesearch members by placing bids on their behalf each week because they are unable to do so themselves through health issues, wellbeing or learning difficulties.



Supporting mental health and wellbeing

We have a Wellbeing Team which 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 2022 / 2023, we accepted a total of 1,045 wellbeing referrals into the service.

“Thanks to Nicola and the Wellbeing Team for the support received. I felt you were very understanding, explained everything in detail and was never judgemental when discussing my support needs.”

A tenant who received support from our Wellbeing Team.

Staff training

We trained four employees to become Dementia Friends. The training focused on learning about dementia. With this understanding, our Dementia Friends can help our tenants who have dementia

In addition, we delivered autism and neurodiversity training to 18 employees, which was delivered by Specialist Autism Services. This helped our employees to learn more about autism and other neurological conditions.

Next steps

In addition to the steps outlined above, we will:

Recruit a new Housing Coordinator, which will sit within the Wellbeing Team. This role will be in partnership with the NHS. The aim is to support the transition and discharge planning for people with Learning Disabilities and / or Autism or both who are in Learning Disability and Mental Health secure services across West Yorkshire.

Project SEARCH

We have helped deliver Project SEARCH to our local community, which is an international transition to work programme for young people with learning difficulties and autism. We attended Pinderfields Hospital and White Rose House to deliver mock interviews to a group of young people who had learning difficulties

Additional support

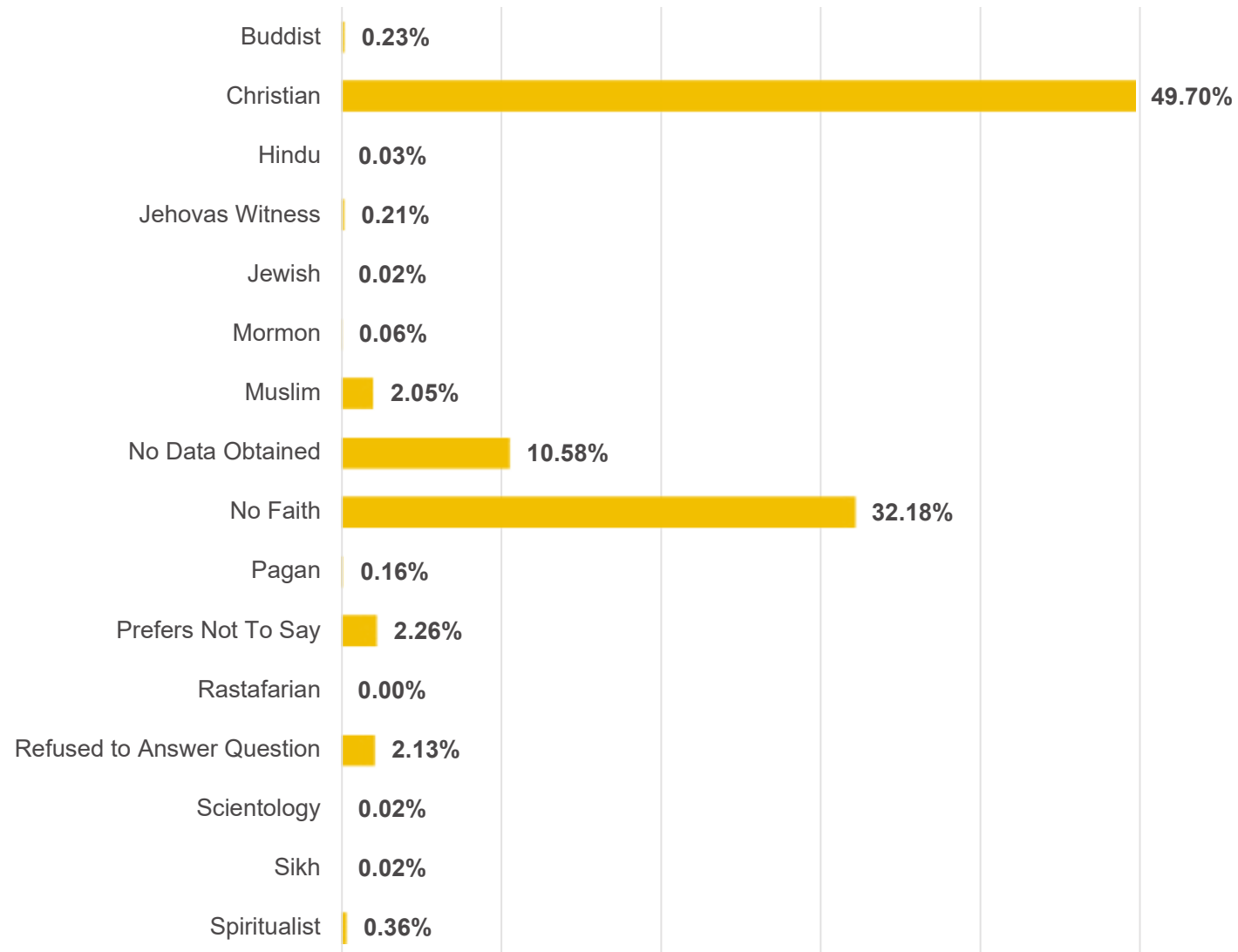
We work in partnership with Wakefield Council's Housing Needs panel to award additional priority to Homesearch applicants who demonstrate a need for accommodation because of a physical disability, learning disability or mental health condition.

In addition, our Tenancy Ready Team provides a personalised package of support for people who may struggle when moving into their new home. Support often includes: helping the customer set up their rent and utilities account, claiming additional benefits and applying for grants to furnish their new home.





Religion



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' faith does not become a barrier to participating in our activities. We have a shared calendar which is populated with religious festivals.



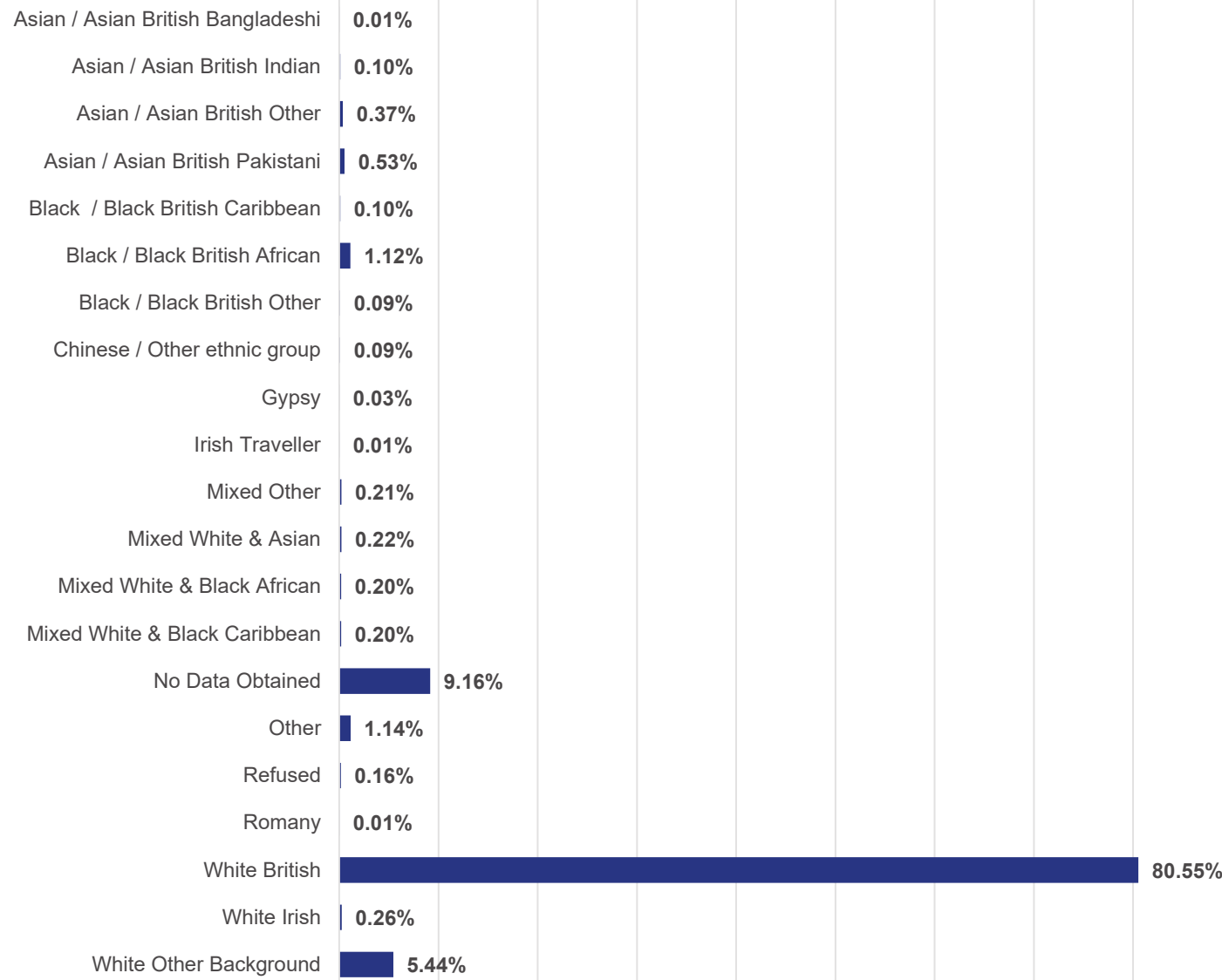
Resident engagement

We strive for proportional representation in all customer engagement, involvement and scrutiny. This ensures that our input from customers is reflective of our customer demographic. 2.9% of our customers have a non-Christian faith.

Our aim is for 2.9% of our engagement to be with customers who are of non-Christian faith.



Race



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 have used our social media channels to promote this pledge to our tenants. This shows our tenants that we stand against racism.



Interpreters

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



Supporting refugees

Our Cash Wise Team worked in partnership with Wakefield Council's Resettlement team, to deliver financial support and information sessions to refugees. This helped to support the new members of our community.



Resident engagement

We strive for proportional representation in all customer engagement, involvement and scrutiny. This ensures that our input from customers is reflective of our customer demographic. 9.8% of our customers are from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Therefore, our aim is for 9.8% of our engagement to be with customers from an ethnic minority background.

Next Steps

- In addition to the steps outlined above, we will:
- promote Root Out Racism more widely to our tenants and community to show that we are committed to racial equality; and
 - undertake quality engagement with at least 10% of our ethnic minority tenants.

Current performance 2022 / 2023

- 10.13% of tenants are from an ethnic minority group.

Aspiration 2023 / 2024

- 10% of tenants to be from an ethnic minority group.

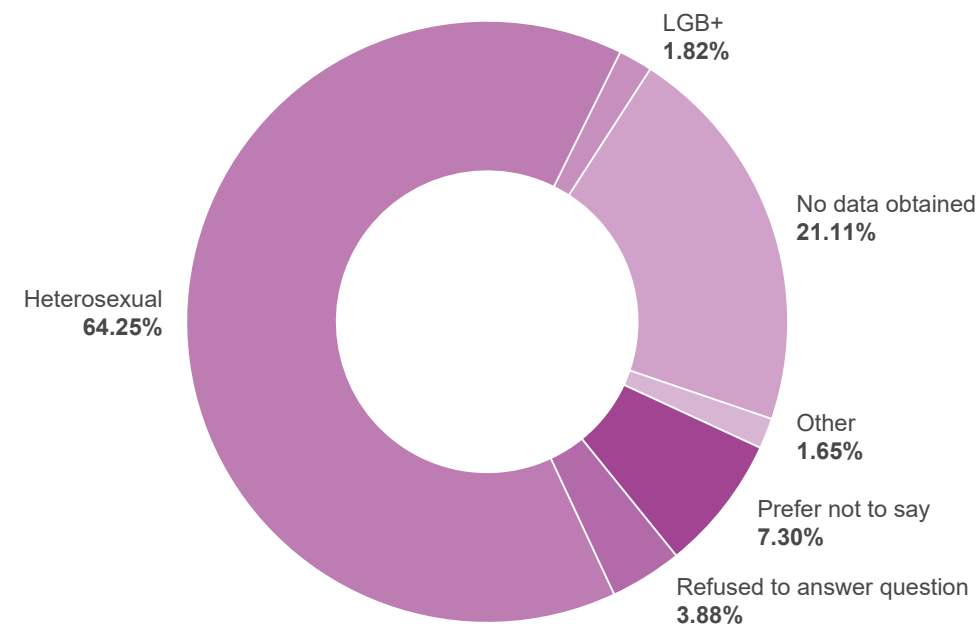


Gender reassignment

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. As part of this process, we will begin to collect data on the number of tenants who are trans or non-binary.



Sexual orientation



64.25% of tenants identify as heterosexual, 7.30% preferred not to disclose their sexual orientation and 3.47% of tenants identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or 'other'.

We believe that people's sexual orientation should be accepted and respected. We stand against discrimination of any form.

Wakefield Pride

To show our support to the LGBTQ+ community, our employees attended Wakefield Pride in 2022. We held a stall at Pride to promote the services that we provide, and we hosted fun competitions and giveaways. Over the day, we engaged with over 150 attendees. We consulted with Pride attendees, asking them "If you could name one thing that WDH could do for the LGBTQ+ community, what would it be?"

Over 50 people responded. We carefully analysed the responses and we have already started implementing some of the suggestions, such as sharing **personal pronouns**.

We are looking forward to attending Wakefield Pride again in 2023!

Next steps

In addition to the steps outlined above, we will:

- offer allyship training to staff, so that they can learn about being an LGBTQ+ ally; and ¹⁰
- launch the option of staff wearing a rainbow lanyard, which is a visible sign of LGBTQ+ acceptance and inclusivity.

Resident engagement

We strive for proportional representation in all customer engagement, involvement and scrutiny. This ensures that our input from customers is reflective of our customer demographic. 1.82% of our customers have told us that they are LGB+.

Therefore, our aim is for 3.2% of our engagement to be with LGB+ customers.

We donated £500 towards the running costs of Wakefield Pride.

"Having attended many events on behalf of WDH over several years 'Wakefield Pride 2022' stands out as one of the best.

This was in part due to the huge number of visitors it attracted but mainly for the fantastic response we had from the LGBTQ+ Community when, as part of an engagement exercise we asked their views to the question 'If you could name one thing that WDH could do for the LGBTQ+ Community what would it be?' Attendees were keen to provide their comments with a total of 57 responses received.

Wakefield Pride now features as a key event for the Engagement Team to attend on an annual basis."

Jen Schofield
Engagement Officer

LGBTQ+

Those of us identify as identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning or other.

Current performance 2022 / 2023

- 1.82% of our tenants told us that they are LGB+.

Aspiration 2023 / 2024

- 3.2% of our tenants to tell us that they are LGB+.

¹⁰ 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.



Marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity

Supporting families

We are keen to support families living in our community, particularly those who have children and young people who are vulnerable or at risk. We offer children and young people the opportunity to develop their skills and employability in a variety of ways:

- **We delivered our Community Leadership Programme**, where we took 60 young people, from various local schools to the Outward Bound Centre. During this residential trip, the young people took part in activities specially designed to improve their communication, teamwork and resilience. The programme ultimately helps young people to realise that they can succeed. The programme has been delivered every year⁵ since 2006, helping over 1,500 young people develop the skills that are so important for them as they move into employment.
- **Joint funding four separate Branching Out Programmes** - a programme specially designed to support young people who are facing barriers to achieving their potential. The programme was delivered by Wakefield Youth Services, and joint funded by WDH and Healthy Happy Holidays. This partnership working meant that we could double the amount of support we have been able to give previously, helping a total 60 young people (2021 / 2022 Branching Out Programme helped 24 young people). The young people participated in a variety of experiences aimed at improving their employability skills.

- **We took part in the Positive Footprints programme**, which is delivered to primary schools that have a higher percentage of children qualifying for free school meals. The programme aims to give children a positive introduction to the world of work. Our employees visited 10 schools to talk about their jobs and answer questions. Both in-person and virtual sessions have been delivered to the children advising them about careers and raising their aspirations.

Christmas charity appeal 2022

Each year we organise a Christmas Charity appeal to gather donations of children's toys and food. This year, we also asked employees to support the appeal by buying raffle tickets and all the money raised went directly to the appeal.

Employees donated over £3,000 and contractors donated £1,000.

Over 2,000 vulnerable adults, elderly and children benefited from this scheme by receiving either food or a Christmas gift.





Socioeconomic factors

There are additional factors that we consider when we are working towards being a more diverse and inclusive organisation. One factor is socioeconomic status.

As the diversity wheel demonstrates, socioeconomic factors are closely related to the nine protected characteristics. Socioeconomic factors refer to a person's income level, occupation, education and housing situation. People who experience socioeconomic disadvantage can often face discrimination.

We are committed to supporting tenants who are experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage by helping them to:

- manage their income;
- find employment; and
- find a home if they are homeless.

Managing income

Cash Wise - Financial Fitness Sessions

We have also attended a number of community events, aimed at supporting residents around the cost of living crisis.

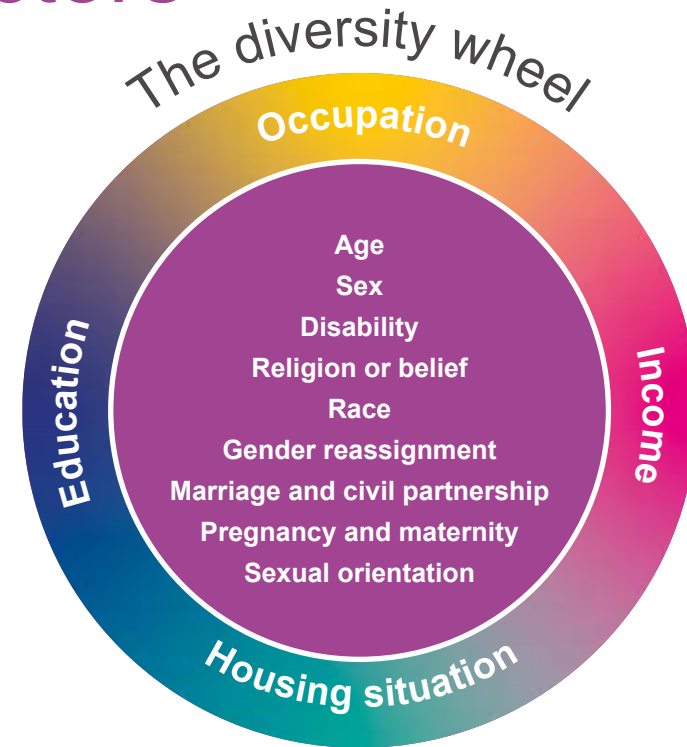
we organised a Financial Fitness information session at Wakefield Market, with Cash Wise and Leeds Credit Union all available to offer advice and support.

- we have supported 9,297 cases; and
- obtained over £2.48 million worth of monetary gain from successful benefit and grant awards and utility savings.

More worryingly this year with the cost of living crisis, we have supported more customers who are in financial crisis and have accessed food parcels valued at over £48,000 to help offer some financial relief.

Ready for tenancy course

In partnership with Wakefield Council's Adult Education Service, we offer this course to our tenants which helps them to gain the skills needed to manage their home. The course covers money management, priority 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 become self-employed or grow their existing business.

In 2022 / 2023 we worked with 561 customers, 359 found employment or training opportunity, four new businesses started trading and 24 customers were supported to grow their business or become entrepreneur ready.

Training for employment

The Training for Employment Programme helps our unemployed tenants gain employability skills. The programme provides participants with training, work experience, support and mentoring. At the end of the programme our tenants are in a better position when applying for further employment.

In 2022 / 2023 a total of 26 tenants completed placements on our Training for Employment programme. At the end of March 2023 79% of placements had found further employment or training within three months of leaving programme.

Targeted engagement

We have done some targeted door knocking to promote resident involvement opportunities with underrepresented groups of tenants.

Young tenants

Following on from On Your Street we targeted young tenants who expressed an interest in being involved by contacting them and discussing the various ways they could be involved. This was aimed at tenants aged 18-30 and was done in the hope of increasing participation in our groups.

We also engaged with young people through:

- litter picks with schools and youth groups;
- attending and supporting mock interviews in schools to give pupils experience of interviews before starting college and work;
- supported positive footprints - attending schools to discuss different careers; and
- helped with tree planting at local schools.

Older people

- Silver Sunday Event - we attended and supported Age UK's Silver Sunday events. This year's event is scheduled for 1 October where partner agencies come together to promote services for older people and signpost those in need of support.
- We support groups such as Simply Leisure, Senior Citizens Support Group, The Community Choir Wakefield with events and activities. A recent example was where The Community Choir Wakefield sang songs at Simply Leisure. We have also arranged for the choirs to attend ILSs to increase social activities.
- We have done inter-generational activities with schools and ILSs such as Carol performances at Hatfield Court, and Christmas Cards from the children.

Disability

We continue to work and support Move Ahead who lease a community building from WDH in Outwood. The group works with people who have brain injuries. This year we supported their Coronation event by donating vouchers and they supported a tree planting activity we did in Outwood.



Eastmoor litter pick with Eastmoor Community Project. WDH Supported Easter activities that were organised for children to take part in the school holidays.



Greenhill Primary School sung Christmas carols at Hatfield Court ILS.



The Community Choir Wakefield performed songs for Simply Leisure an Over 55s group.



Jubilee tree planting activities with the support of Move Ahead.



Linking Schools and ILSs for Christmas events was very well received by both parties. We have supported two new groups within ILSs in 2022 to set up and access funding. This has created a number of community events specifically aimed at the residents of ILS to assist with social isolation and age and health related issues. As the events are onsite and many of the groups have incorporated things like taking afternoon teas to residents in their own homes if they are unable to get to the centre due to disabilities etc.

We continue to work with POUCH (Parents of Unique Children) to support the group with the issues faced by both Children and parents / Carers with a wide ranging spectrum of social and medical issues. We meet regularly with the parents who would like me to come to a few drop in sessions but due to the nature of the children's needs doing a formal 'event' wouldn't benefit them.

We are working with Barracks Community Association to create Phase 3 on Queens Square - which will be a corner plot feature which will include a bench and planter and will be wheelchair and pushchair friendly to create a calm space for residents of the estate to meet and visit.

Helping homeless people

We work in partnership with Wakefield Council to reduce the number of people who are homeless in our community. Our Tenancy Ready Team supports homeless people to find a home. The homeless person receives support to address and break down the barriers which are preventing them from finding a home.

Between April 2022 and February 2023 our homelessness co-ordinator supported 95 customers; 31 participants went on to gain secure accommodation as a result of support provided by the co-ordinator. This service was in partnership with DWP and was operational for 12 months, the provision ended at the end of January 2023.

Other activities

Total Inclusion Group (TIG)

TIG is comprised of a diverse range of tenants and employees. 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 aspirational targets. The diversity of TIG ensures that a range of perspectives are represented.

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.

Customer scrutiny and consultation

We utilise a panel of over 830 involved customers for scrutiny and consultation purposes. The customer panel consists of a demographically representative set of customers across several characteristics, including age, ethnicity and location, mirroring the general customer profile.

Charitable donations

We are committed to creating confident communities and we recognise the valuable contribution that charities make to improving people's lives. Through our Employee Draw, we have donated to a range of charities from employee contributions.

Each month we hold a draw for employees, with deductions going directly from their salary starting at £1 up to £10. There are cash prizes for employees starting at £200 to £50 and the remainder of the money raised is donated to charities suggested by members of the draw. Recipients include Airedale Food Bank, Leukaemia UK, The British Red Cross and Tiny Hands Baby Bank, adding vital funds to the great work they do in our area and more widely across our region.



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