

Diversity and Inclusion 2023



Contents

Welcome	3
At a glance	4
Who we are	5
Workforce	6
Employee networks	8
Achieved	9
Next steps	10
Thank you	11
Appendix 1	12
Appendix 2	18
Appendix 3	19



Welcome

When we first reported on diversity and inclusion in 2021, in the wake of the murder of George Floyd, we said that we: "Wanted to ensure that our words of support were not empty gestures but were backed up by real action to help achieve change."

Since making that call to action, we are pleased to say we have delivered on some of the ambitious targets we set for ourselves. Examples include, improving the representation of black, Asian and ethnic minority employees in junior and middle management positions.

And once again, our work was recognised with a bronze award from the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion. We were also named as a 'Best Workplace for Women' and 'Best Workplace' by Great Place To Work®.

We are rightfully proud of these achievements but our progress towards a more diverse and inclusive workforce will be incremental. Partly, because our staff turnover is low but also because change of this kind takes time. (For a detailed breakdown of this data please refer to Appendix 1 pages 12-17). We are working hard on making our employment processes more inclusive, accessible and fair for all. This report highlights what still needs to be done, as well as where we have delivered. (Please see pages 9 and 10 for more on this.)

Guided by our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan we are as determined as ever in making strides towards our diversity and inclusion targets. This report aims to be an open and honest account of our progress to date and our plans for the future.

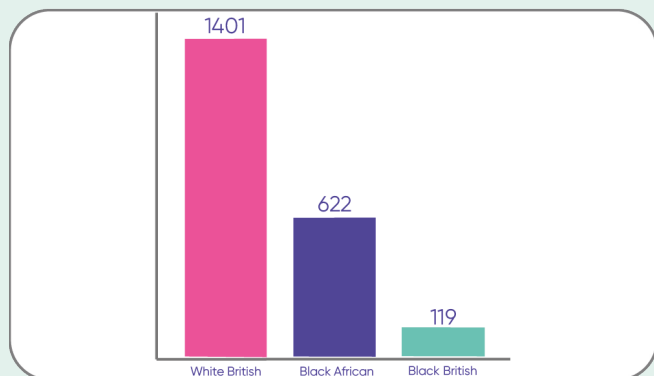


Oliver Mills
Chair of Trustees



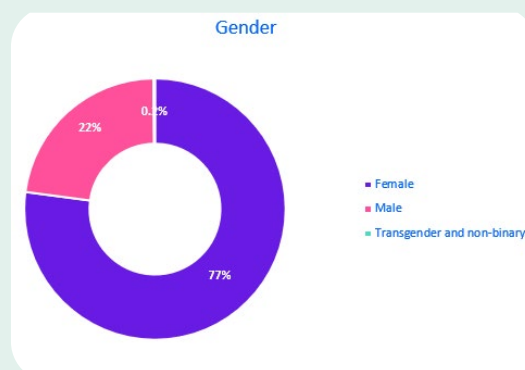
Sarah Maguire
Chief Executive

At a glance



The three most common ethnicities are:
White British 55%
Black African 24%
Black British 5%

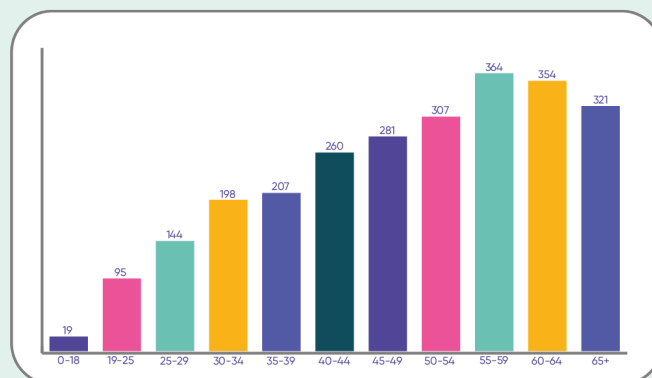
Choice Support has:
1966 employees who identify as female
579 employees who identify as male
5 employees who identify as transgender or nonbinary



14%

of our staff describe themselves as having a disability.

321 employees are over the age of 65
114 employees are under the age of 25.



For more information about Choice Support, make sure you're following us on:

X- Choice_Support

Instagram- Choice_Support

Facebook- Choice Support

LinkedIn- Choice Support



Who we are

Our purpose is to support people to find opportunities for creating their own happiness.

We employ almost 2600 people and support approximately 1400 people. To help us realise our vision of becoming a more diverse and inclusive organisation, at every level, we want more people from diverse backgrounds to come and work for us. We would like to hear from people of different ethnicities, sexual orientations, ages, faiths, and people with disabilities in this exciting time in our history.



"I joined the Board of Trustees at Choice Support in 2023, after following and admiring their work for many years. I've always seen, and continue to see now, energy, activity and determination to include everyone in the mainstream of life. People from diverse backgrounds with different skills and talents, all pulling together to make this a reality,"
Bob Tindall, Trustee.

Our Commitment

Our Commitment to championing diversity and inclusion today is more important than ever. We have seen a lot of positive progress since Choice Support was founded 40 years ago. But change also brings new challenges. The advent of social media has made it easier for disinformation to spread and for minorities and vulnerable people to be targeted with the click of a button. We will always stand up for the people we support and work with and fight against intolerance, prejudiced views and hate speech.

We promise in Our Commitment:

- to challenge discrimination
- encourage better understanding and respect between all people
- have a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to unlawful discrimination, bullying and harassment
- be a welcoming place where everyone feels they belong and can be themselves.

Workforce

We are proud to be a diverse organisation, with a diverse workforce, that is actively trying to reflect our diversity at every level of the organisation. In our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan we committed to increase the number of black, Asian and ethnic minority employees in management positions.

Black, Asian and ethnic minority employees now make up 28% of people in junior and middle management positions, against 20% in 2020.

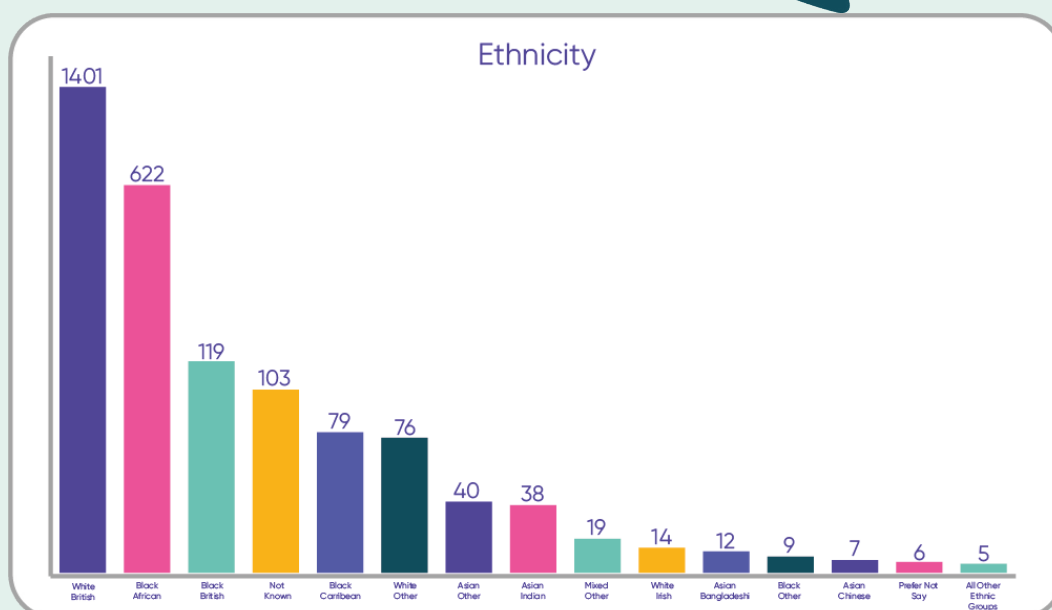
This puts us in a good position to see more black, Asian and ethnic minority employees in senior management roles in the future. This won't happen overnight, but we are moving in the right direction.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for a full breakdown of key employee diversity data. We will use this information as a benchmark to measure our progress when the next report comes out.

In our first report on diversity and inclusion in 2021 we said we would develop our information gathering to better track the progress of diverse candidates through the recruitment and promotion process. We are hoping to make progress on this through our new Digital Transformation Strategy in the future.

"I joined Choice Support at the beginning of 2023 and have been impressed time and again at the company's commitment to diversity and inclusion. I attend the Diverse Voices network every month, as well as the LGBTQ+ inclusion and I facilitate the Young Person's Inclusion Network. The existence of these safe spaces acts as proof that Choice Support cares and makes an active effort to ensure employees feel safe, heard, and included,"

James Treadwell, Marketing and Communications Officer.



Workforce

Learning and development

Since our last report, we have introduced more diversity and inclusion training resources. A mix of e-learning, podcasts and webinars that informs employees on a range of interesting topics including:

- neurodiversity
- intersectionality
- cultural nuances
- anti-racism in the workplace.

Management Development Training

A further 22 people have now completed our LEAD management development programme for new and aspiring leaders. That's 48 people in total since April 2021. The LEAD management programme supports aspiring and new managers to embrace diversity, lead inclusive teams, and to recognise and challenge discrimination effectively when it occurs.

The new e-learning course on Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging for managers/leads is now available. Our chairs from the Diverse Voices network, a group which focuses on race and ethnicity issues to promote better understanding within Choice Support, are reviewing anti-racism training sourced from the Diversity Trust. The training will give managers a better understanding of various forms of racism, as well as racial bias, and will look at the issues affecting the black community today and in the past.



Employee networks

Our employee inclusion networks are open to everyone, and staff are encouraged to talk about different diversity and inclusion issues at monthly meetings. It's a chance to share experiences and learn from one another, and to connect people within the organisation that wouldn't otherwise meet.

We have three employee inclusion networks:

1. Diverse Voices.
2. The LGBTQ+ and Allies Network, dealing with sexuality and gender identity issues.
3. The Young Person's Inclusion Network.

Eventually we hope to have more networks, including one for disabled colleagues. We can then establish a joint network, so representatives from each one can share the issues affecting them and cultivate a culture of understanding and inclusion throughout the organisation.

Although a network for disabled employees has yet to be set-up, we have run some Time to Talk sessions on hidden disabilities and chronic long-term health conditions. These online meetups offer support around menopause, anxiety, grief and many other wellbeing matters.

Discussions from the networks have led to positive outcomes for Choice Support. Our business plan target to increase the number of ethnic minorities in managerial positions was influenced by the Diverse Voices Network. And in 2021, an application was made to attend Pride London for the first time, again a direct outcome from our networks. This year we had our own float!

Importantly, the networks allow senior managers to hear the views of colleagues and answer questions. The Chief Executive, Sarah Maguire, and Chief People Officer, Mark Ferry, attend most meetings. Trustees and other members of the senior leadership team attend too.

The networks are a great source for us to create content, from what we learn, for our staff and external audience. We hope our blogs and news stories inform, educate, and help start more conversations around diversity and inclusion.

Unfortunately, we have struggled to establish a national network of local diversity champions and we are re-looking at what we can do to establish this network in all our regions.

Achieved

Everything we have achieved since our last report has been guided by our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

What we have achieved:

- We have added 20 new training resources covering diversity and inclusion, including: Introduction to Personal Pronouns Podcast, Trans and Nonbinary Inclusion for Managers/Team Leads e-learning and the Banter and Bullying Podcast.
- Surpassed our business plan middle management diversity targets. Black, Asian and ethnic minority employees now make up 28% of people in junior and middle management positions, against a business plan target of 25% by 31 March 2023.
- The results of the 2022 staff survey show that we achieved our business plan objective for most groups of staff. All ages, ethnic groups, and genders, except other, score within +/- 5% of the total average scores. So, for most employees, their experience of working for Choice Support is similar, regardless of their background. The 'other gender' scored 12% below the average score, but with only a very small sample of respondents. We want all the people we support, and our staff, to feel safe. We are committed to the 'Stand with Trans' pledge, and want everyone to feel that they belong, regardless of their background or identity.
- We now have the most diverse Board of Trustees in our history.
- We continued to support the LGBTQ+ community by attending London's Pride 2023 event.
- Used our social feeds to post more diversity and inclusion content on cultural and religious events/festivals, like Ramadan and International Women's Day.
- Produced guidance on the menopause and issued to services as part of our gender equality drive. We also have our menopause Time to Talk sessions.

"A day full of fun, smiles, and lots of love. Wonderful to hear the cheers of support for Supported Loving and Choice Support. I feel very proud that Choice Support was represented by people we support, our staff and the LGBTQ+ forum. Proud that autistic people, people with learning disabilities and/or mental health issues were all part of the 35,000 strong Pride Parade,"

Chief Executive, Sarah Maguire, speaking on London Pride 2023



Next steps

Ongoing:

- New e-learning is being developed to provide black, Asian and people from ethnic minority backgrounds easier access to training similar to the Skills for Care “Moving up” development programme.
- Guidance is currently being reviewed to ensure we are working with suppliers that demonstrate a real commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- 518 colleagues responded to our request of providing us with more diversity monitoring information, particularly on religion/belief and sexual orientation. We are in the process of updating the HR database and plan to repeat the exercise.

These are some of our next steps:

- Develop and implement an action plan to address the diversity and inclusion needs of the people we support and the services we provide.
- To support our black, Asian, and ethnic minority colleagues in middle management positions to move on to more senior positions and help them prepare for the next stage in their careers.
- To collect more diversity monitoring information on the people we support. By tracking the demographic of the population that we have at present, and how that’s going to change, we can plan to meet people’s needs better in the future.
- Finalise guidance for use in our selection of suppliers, to ensure that they demonstrate a real commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan was produced following consultation with the workforce and our recognised Trade Unions. It is regularly updated and shared with our inclusion networks and approved by the Board of Trustees.



“It’s important for me that the company I work for (Choice Support) reflects the broad society it serves. People of all ethnicities, sexual orientations, and faiths, from whatever background or group, should feel welcome here. Publishing a Diversity and Inclusion report shows me they care and are committed to working towards real change,”
John Hammond, chair of LGBTQ+ Allies.

Thank you

For reading our second report on diversity and inclusion. We hope you can see the progression we have made and where we are going next.

If you are reading this report and are impressed by what we are trying to achieve, or, if you feel we should be doing more to address diversity and inclusion, then we want to hear from you. We are always looking for talented people, at every level, who share our vision to help shape us into an even more diverse and inclusive organisation.

We are grateful for the continued support of our Trustees and Senior Leaders on our diversity and inclusion work. We would also like to thank the members of our inclusion networks for their continued support and commitment to this important work.

So, please give us your ideas and feedback on this year's report and tell us if you don't think we are living up to our promises.

Thank you to members of our Marketing and Communications team, Lee Penfold and James Treadwell for compiling this report.

Thank you,
Mark Ferry, Chief People Officer



Raghibir Ram,
Operational Lead

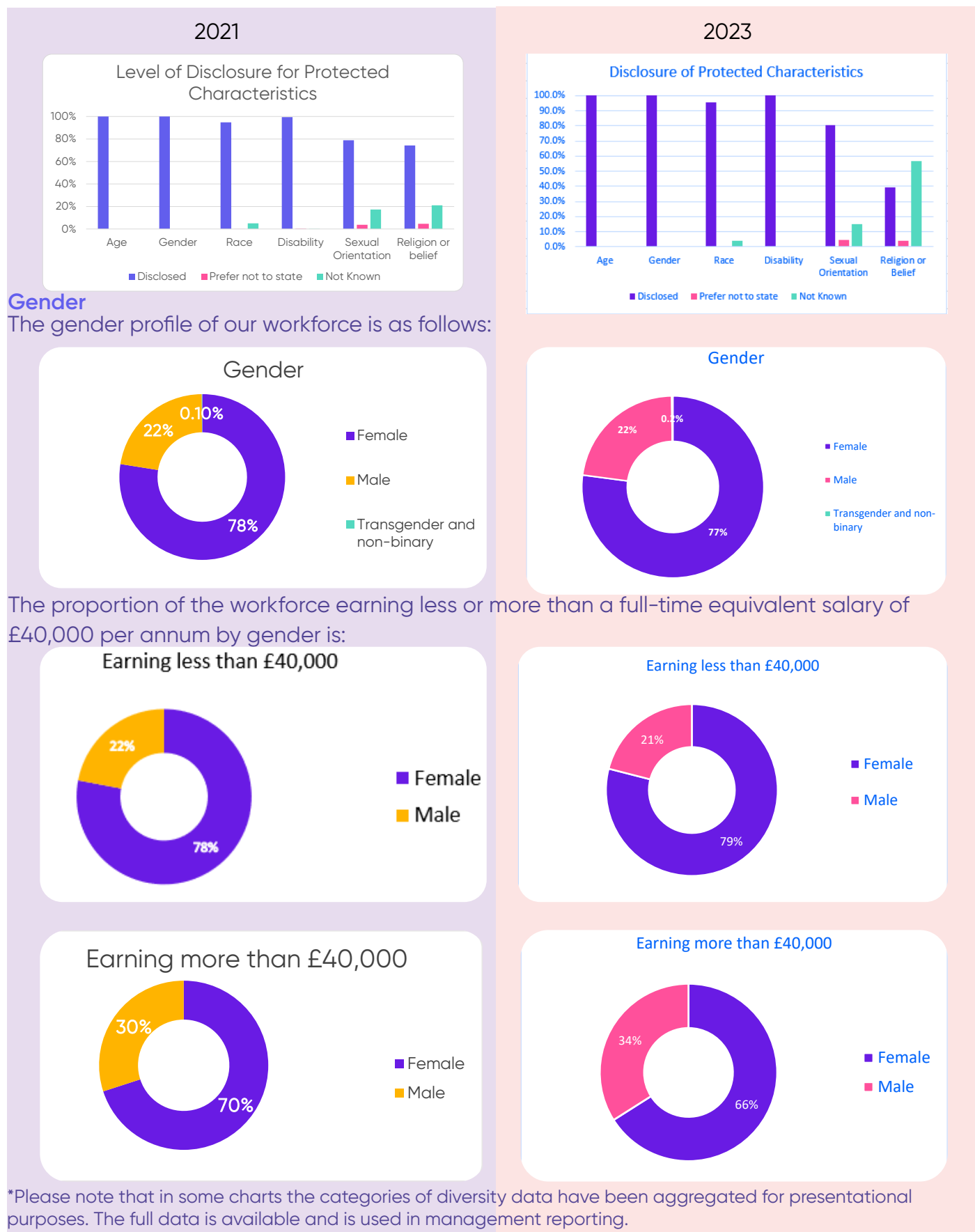
Gracie Swanson, Bank
Sanctuary Peer Worker

Mark Ferry,
Chief People Officer

Appendix 1

On 1 April 2023 there were 2550 people working for Choice Support, including 713 casual workers. That's 245 fewer employees than were working at the same time in 2021.

We still have a very high level of disclosure of diversity information from our employees*. The level of disclosure for each protected characteristic is as follows:



Choice Support treats all our employees fairly and in accordance with our legal obligations. We believe men and women should be paid the same for work of equal value and we publish our gender pay gap annually. It is an important step towards greater transparency about gender differences in pay that will in time help society achieve an improved gender balance.

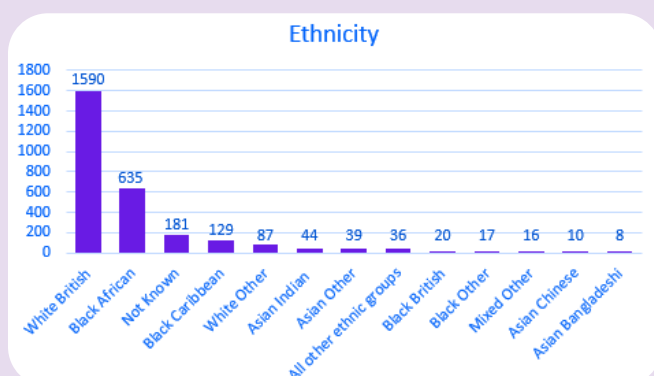
Choice Support's gender pay-gap for all employees is 5.01%. Down from 5.9% in 2020. This means that on average men are paid 5.01% more than women. It does not mean men are paid more than women for doing the same job. Rather, it reflects structural differences in the workforce eg more men employed in senior positions.

According to the Office for National Statistics the average gender pay-gap for all employees in the UK in 2022 was 14.9%.

Ethnicity

As you can see White British and Black African still account for the largest ethnic groups working at Choice Support... all other ethnic groups account for approximately 21% of the workforce.

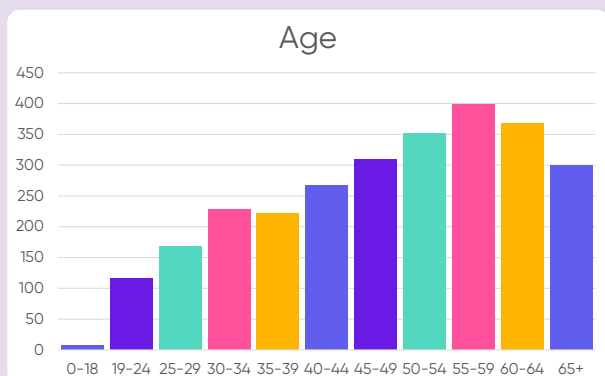
2021



The ethnic diversity of the workforce varies significantly in different parts of the country. In Medway, Kent, almost all the workforce is White British. In the London Borough of Greenwich just over half of the workforce is Black African.

Age

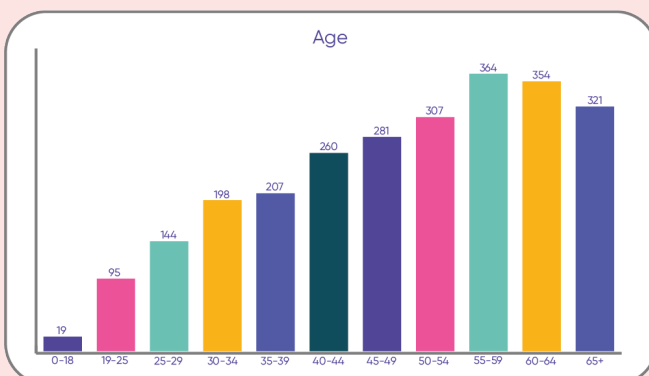
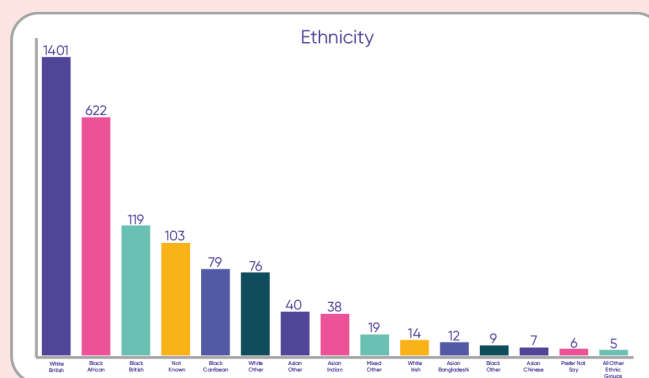
The age profile of the workforce is as follows:



Disability

in 2021 we had 341 people who described themselves as having a disability, which was almost 14% of our total workforce.

2023

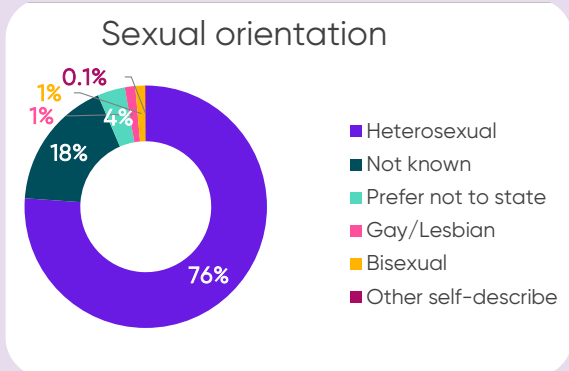


We currently employ 361 people who describe themselves as having a disability, which is almost 14% of our total workforce.

2021

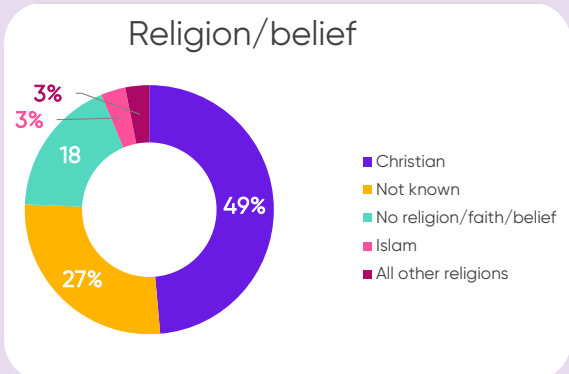
Sexual orientation

The sexual orientation profile of the workforce is:



Religion/Belief

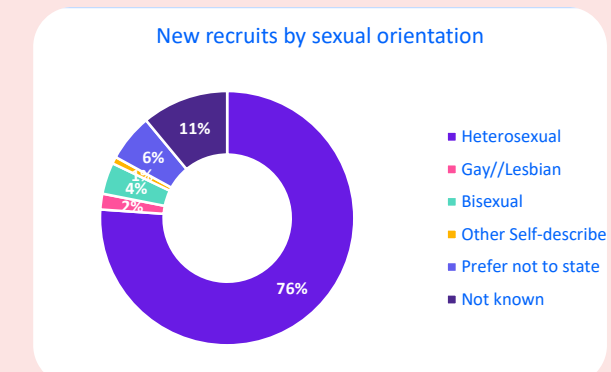
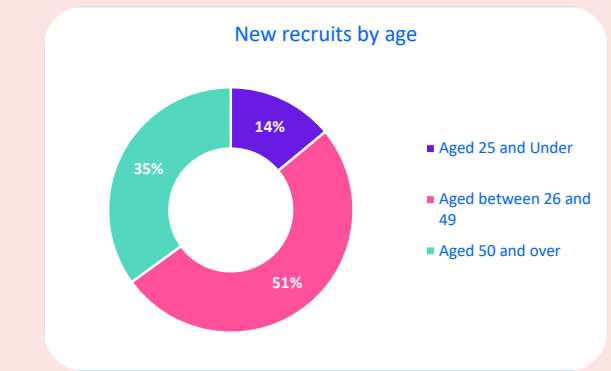
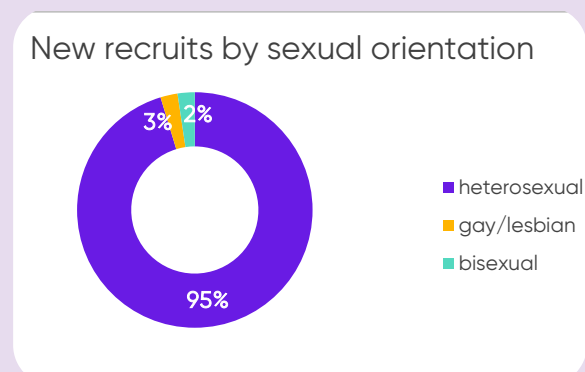
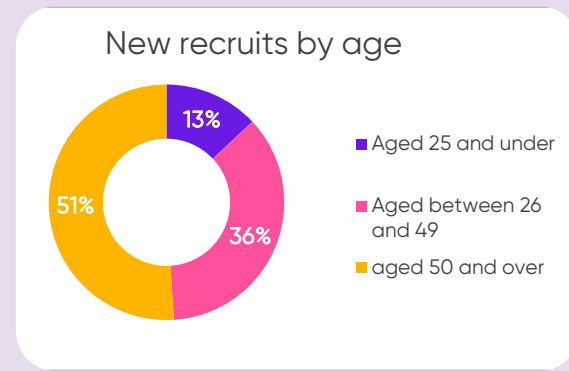
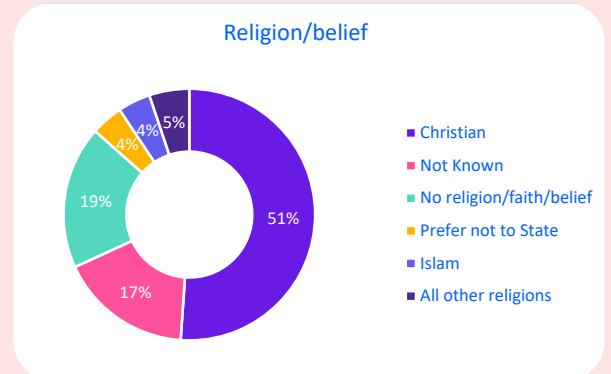
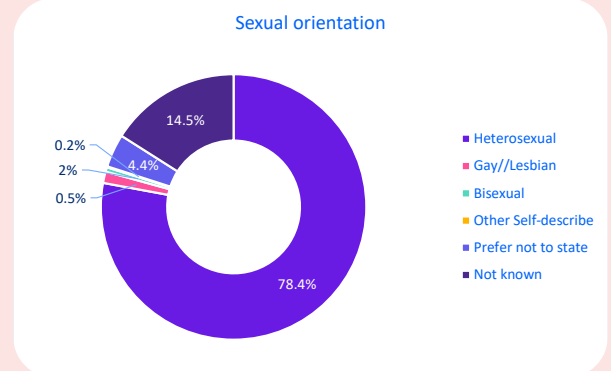
The religion/belief profile of the workforce is:



Recruitment

We have seen the number of new recruits increase by 4.5% since our last report. In the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 we recruited a total of 691 people.

2023



As you can see we have had an increase in the number of new recruits aged between 26 and 49. They now make up the largest proportion of new recruits. There has also been an increase in the number of new recruits who do not identify as heterosexual.

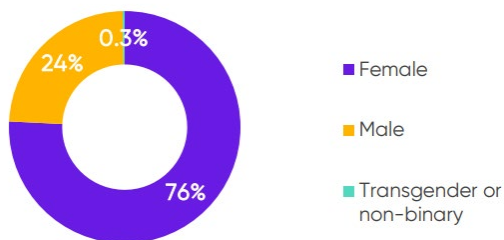
2021

2023

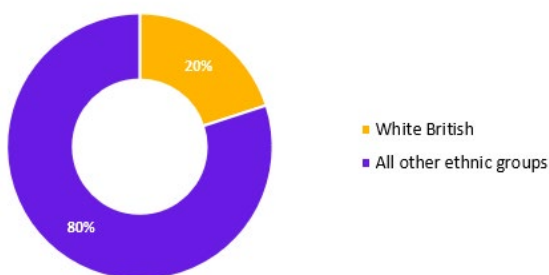
Employee relations

In the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 64 people were subject to formal disciplinary action. That's a 7% rise since we last reported.

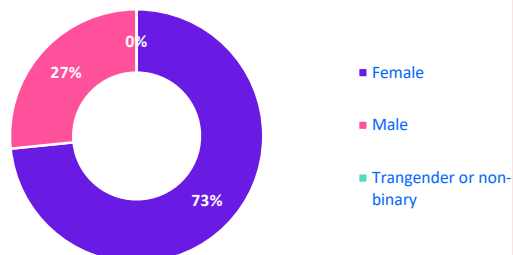
Disciplinary action by gender



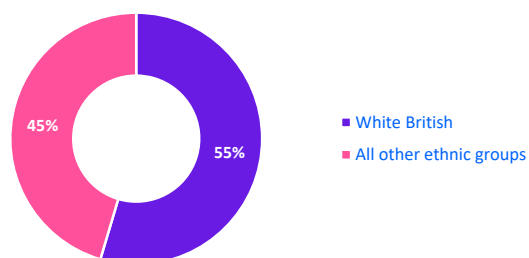
Disciplinary action by ethnicity



Disciplinary action by gender



Disciplinary action by ethnicity

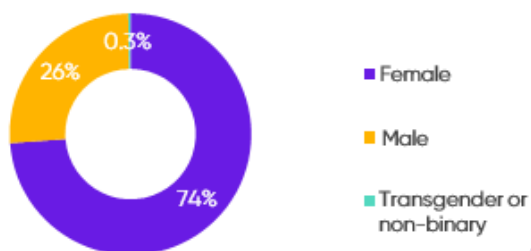


Employee turnover

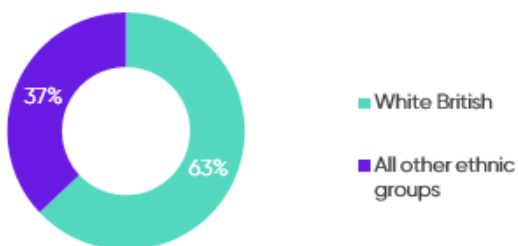
In the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 we had 637 leavers and 145 casual staff were removed from the register.

Recruitment retention in the care sector is a wider issue that has also affected Choice Support in this period.

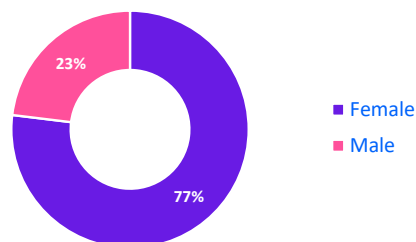
Employee turnover by gender



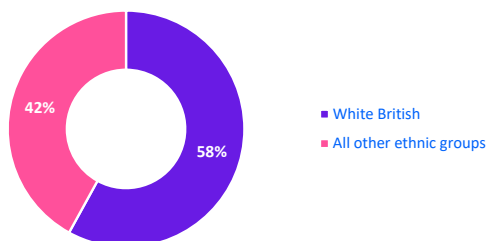
Employee turnover by ethnicity



Employee turnover by gender

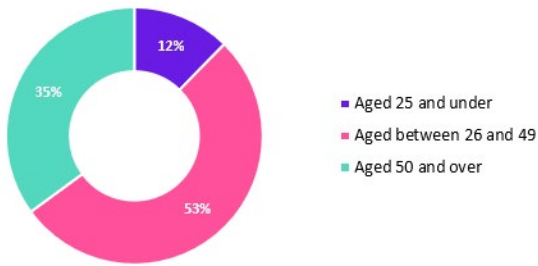


Employee turnover by ethnicity

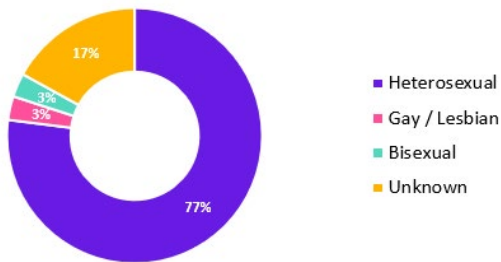


2021

Employee Turnover by age

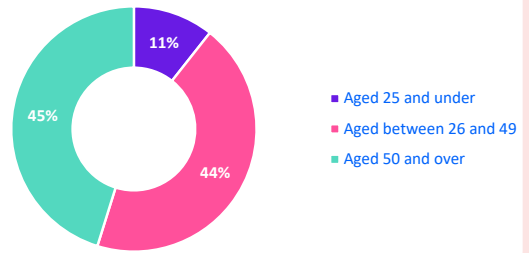


Employee Turnover by sexual orientation

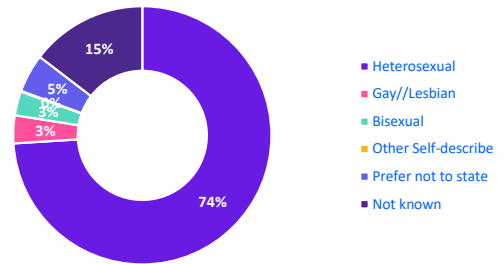


2023

Employee turnover by age



Employee turnover by sexual orientation



Learning and development

Diversity and Inclusion Training

- **82%** of managers/team leaders have now completed our Unconscious Bias training.
- **90.9%** of staff are up to date with their Equality and Diversity Awareness e-learning and 65 staff have completed the Trans Awareness training.
- **64** staff have completed the LGBTQ + Awareness e-learning so far.

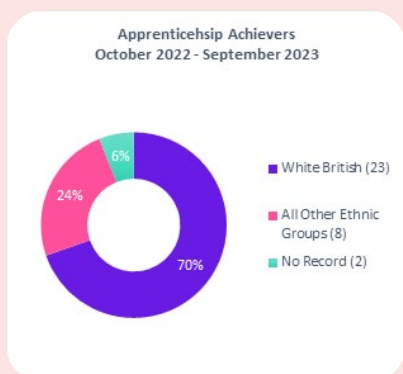
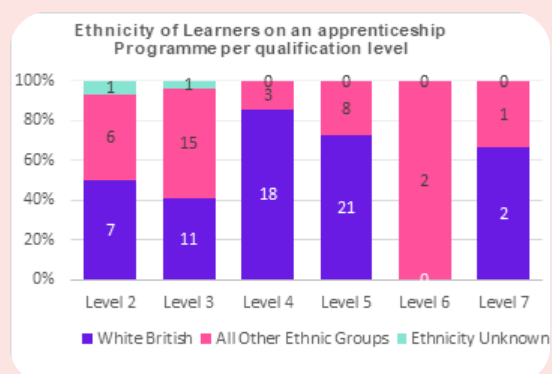
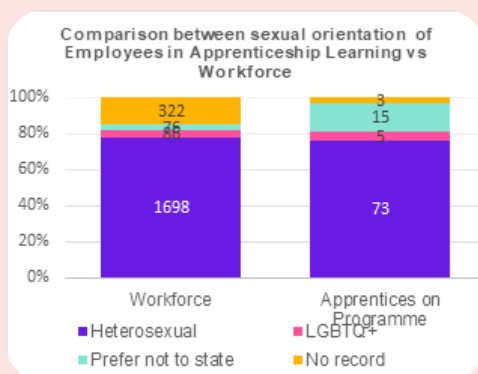
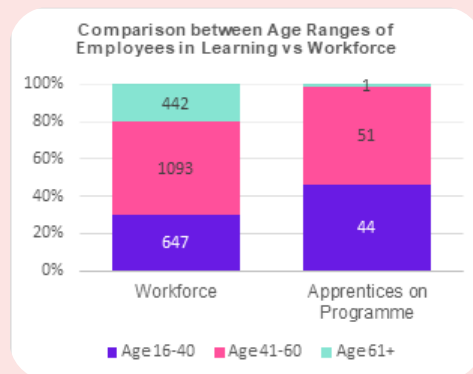
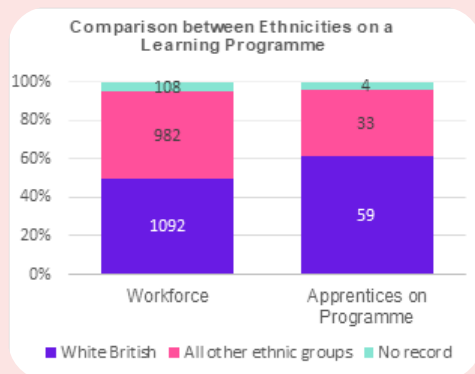
All our staff are required to refresh their training annually to make sure their knowledge is up to date. This is monitored with a traffic light system on our training portal.



Learning and development

Apprenticeships

Below is information about people enrolled on an apprenticeship with Choice Support from October 2022- September 2023.



Apprenticeship Programme New Starters													
October 2022 - September 2023													
New Starters Overall				Level 2 Qualification		Level 3 Qualification		Level 4 Qualification		Level 5 Qualification		Level 6+ Qualification	
55				11		15		18		8		3	
		No. of staff	%	20%		27%		33%		15%		5%	
Ethnicity	White British	33	60%	5	45%	7	47%	13	72%	7	88%	1	33%
	All other ethnic groups	20	36%	5	45%	8	53%	4	22%	1	13%	2	67%
	No record	2	4%	1	9%	0	0%	1	6%	0	0	0	0
Age	Aged 16-40	31	56%	6	55%	11	73%	9	50%	3	38%	2	67%
	Aged 41-60	23	42%	5	45%	4	27%	8	44%	5	63%	1	33%
	Aged 61+	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%	0	0	0	0
Sexual Orientation	LGBTQ+	0	0%	2	18%	0	0%	1	6%	2	0.25	0	0
	Opposite Sex	13	24%	8	73%	14	93%	12	67%	4	50%	3	100%
	No record	3	5%	1	9%	1	7%	5	28%	2	25%	0	0%

		Apprenticeship Programme Leavers: October 2022- September 2023									
		Leavers		Level 2 Qualification		Level 3 Qualification		Level 4 Qualification		Level 5 Qualification	
		14		2		6		4		2	
		No. of staff	%	14%		43%		29%		14%	
Ethnicity	White British	5	36%	1	50%	2	33%	1	25%	1	50%
	All other ethnic groups	7	50%	1	50%	3	50%	2	50%	1	50%
	No record	2	14%	0	0%	1	17%	1	25%	0	0
Age	Aged 16-40	3	21%	1	50%	1	17%	1	25%	0	0%
	Aged 41-60	11	79%	1	50%	5	83%	3	75%	2	100%
	Aged 61+	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0
Sexual Orientation	LGBTQ+	6	43%	1	50%	5	83%	0	0%	0	0
	Opposite Sex	5	36%	1	50%	0	0%	3	75%	1	50%
	No record	3	21%	0	0%	1	17%	1	25%	1	50%



Appendix 2

Every year our employees are invited to take part in the Great Place To Work® survey. We also conduct our own diversity-themed pulse survey which measures how well we are doing on diversity and inclusion as an employer.

The Great Place To Work® survey was completed by 533 employees (25% of the workforce). The results measured people's level of satisfaction working for Choice Support.

The diversity-themed pulse survey was completed by 328 people (15% of the workforce).

The results of all surveys are used as benchmarks to measure future progress. We have achieved our business plan target to narrow the gap between black and LGBTQ+ colleagues. The results will also help inform our further diversity and inclusion work.

The Great Place to Work® survey

- All age groups, ethnic groups and genders, except 'other', scored within +/- 5% of the total average scores. The 'other' gender scored 12% below the average score but only consisted of five respondents.
- The group which scored consistently lower than the average was the 'prefer not to say' category.
- Previously young colleagues were significantly less satisfied working for Choice Support than their older peers, with an average score 12% lower than for all employees, however this is now 3% higher than their peers.
- Black employees were significantly more satisfied than their peers or other ethnicities. Out of 73 questions, black colleagues scored 30 more positively by more than 5%, 26 more positively by 1-5%, two questions were scored the same, 11 more negatively by 1-5% and seven more negatively by more than 5%.
- The question that black colleagues scored lowest was, 'People avoid politics and backstabbing as ways to get things done'. This was 7% lower than the average score for all employees.
- LGBTQ+ colleagues were less satisfied with working for Choice Support than their non-LGBTQ+ peers. LGBTQ+ colleagues scored 20 questions more positively by more than 5%, 21 more positively by 1-5%, seven questions were scored the same, 18 more negatively by 1-5% and nine more negatively by more than 5%.

Choice Support diversity-themed pulse survey

- The average score from all respondents across all questions was 86% (85% 2021).
- Men scored 1% lower than women (3% lower 2021).
- LGBTQ+ colleagues scored 5% lower than their non-LGBTQ+ colleagues.
- The results from disabled people and older colleagues were more positive than for the workforce as a whole.
- We achieved our business plan objectives (both black and LGBTQ+ colleagues average scores were within 5% of the average scores for all employees). Last year black employees scored 11% lower than the average.
- Colleagues who reported physical disabilities were slightly more positive than the average at 91%. However those with mental health issues was much lower at 68%.
- 12 people said that they had experienced discrimination at work in the past year. Seven people said that this was due to their race. Six people said that they had reported discrimination.

Appendix 3

Business plan diversity targets

Actions planned	Measure	2021/22 Target	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target
Increased representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic employees in junior and middle management roles.	Diversity targets. In April 2021 Black, Asian and minority ethnic employees occupied 20% of junior management roles across Choice Support, and 22.5% of middle management roles.	In junior management roles – 23%.	In junior management roles – 25%.	In both junior and middle management roles – 28%.
Staff survey results show greater consistency amongst all groups of employees.	Great Place to Work® survey results.	The total average scores and the scores for individual questions for all individual groups of staff are within +/-5% of the total average scores and the scores for individual questions for all respondents.	The total average scores and the scores for individual questions for all individual groups of staff are within +/-5% of the total average scores and the scores for individual questions for all respondents.	The total average scores and the scores for individual questions for all individual groups of staff are within +/-5% of the total average scores and the scores for individual questions for all respondents.
Publish a report, internally and externally, to show our equality and diversity data.	Report.	Report published.		Report published.