

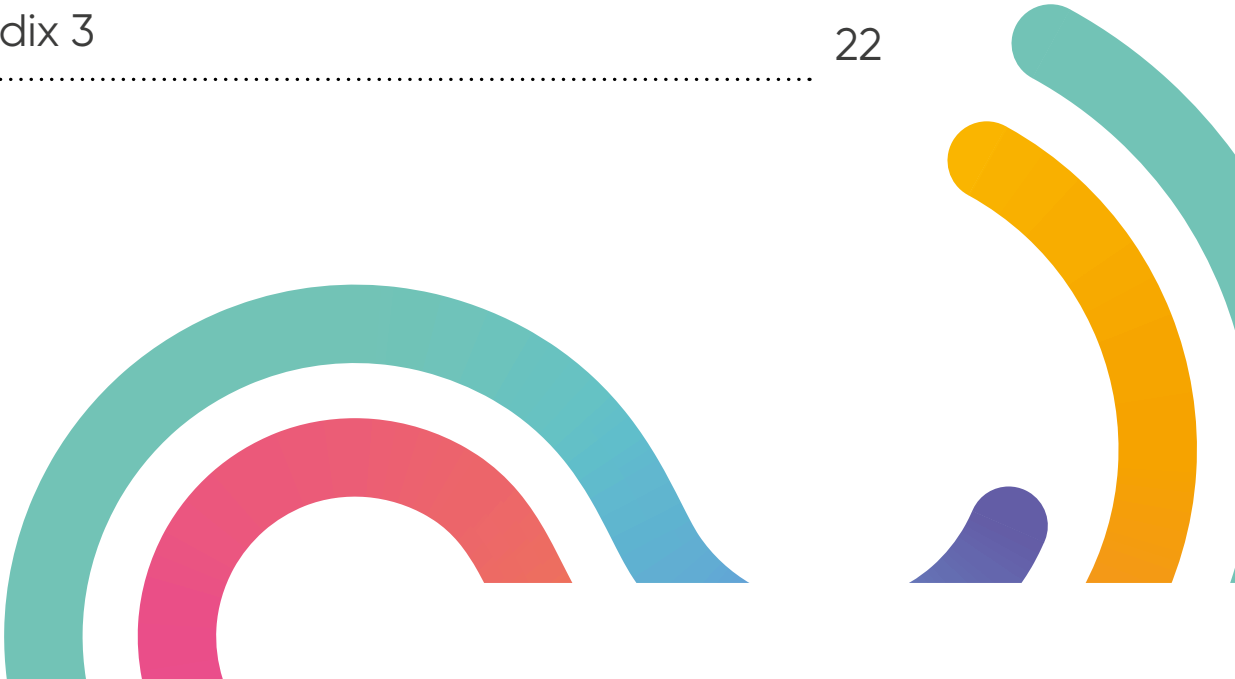
# Diversity and Inclusion

Annual Report – 2021



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# Introduction

We are pleased to introduce Choice Support's first Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report. This report is a public demonstration of our commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion, both as an employer and as a service provider.

Equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging are at the core of Choice Support's work. For almost 40 years we have been supporting people who have, historically, been subject to terrible discrimination and who still struggle to enjoy the same rights as everyone else. Supporting those people to overcome prejudice, so that they can live full lives and be a valued part of their communities, is why we exist. Treating all people with respect is one of our core values.

When George Floyd was murdered and we witnessed the worldwide protests that followed, we wanted to be part of the global movement of change to reject racism. We wanted to ensure that our words of support were not empty gestures, but were backed up by real action to help achieve change. Over the last year we have been working to implement our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. This plan sets out to address all aspects of diversity and inclusion. We are pleased with the progress we have made, but there is much more that needs to be done.

This report describes what we have achieved over the last year, where we are now and what actions we plan to take next. We will publish subsequent reports annually to show progress against our targets.

We are committed to providing the highest level of leadership for our work on diversity and inclusion. We will continue working hard to promote equality, value diversity, and encourage inclusion and belonging, so that Choice Support is a welcoming place for everyone.

Oliver Mills  
Chair



Sarah Maguire  
Chief Executive





# About Choice Support

Choice Support is a national charity, formed in 1984, supporting people with autism, learning disabilities and mental health needs. We provide high quality services including supported living projects, registered care homes, employment services, social enterprises and crisis cafés. We also run the Experts by Experience programme for the Care Quality Commission.

We employ almost 2800 people and support approximately 1500 people. We provide services from Yorkshire to the South Coast.

Our purpose, vision and values underpin everything that we do and apply equally to the people we support and our employees.

Our purpose is to **create opportunities for people to be happy.**

Our vision is: **A world where everyone matters and everyone cares.**

Our values are:

- We care:** we care about people and stand up for what is right.
- We respect:** we are open and honest and value people for who they are.
- We learn:** we listen, we work together and we continue to improve.
- We lead:** we are experts at what we do and make good ideas happen.

Our values mean that equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging are embedded in the culture of Choice Support. However, we recognise we still have a lot of work to do to ensure they are fully reflected in all our work.



# Our commitment

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is deeply rooted in our values and history. For nearly 40 years we have championed the rights of the people we support, fighting against prejudiced views and helping to deliver real change.

Choice Support is committed to challenging discrimination and promoting a better understanding and respect between all people. We have a zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of unlawful discrimination, bullying and harassment.

Choice Support is a diverse organisation, but we want to be better.

We want to be a place where everyone feels that they belong and can be themselves.

We want the make-up of our workforce to be reflected at every level of our organisation.

**"I want to bring about change within the organisation so we truly 'live' our values, to be recognised externally as one of the best networks within the Social Care Industry. We all need to live in a society that is free from discrimination and indifferences. Nobody should be made to feel inferior or belittled just because of who they are."**

Raghubir Ram  
Regional Manager



Raghubir Ram

# Our workforce

Choice Support employs a diverse workforce, but we recognise that our diversity is not adequately represented at every level of management.

A breakdown of key employee diversity data is in Appendix 1. We are publishing this data to be transparent about where we are at present and where we need to improve. We will use this data as a benchmark against which to measure our progress. We plan to develop our information gathering to better track the progress of diverse candidates through the recruitment and promotion process.

## **Learning and Development**

We want to ensure that everyone at Choice Support understands the importance of diversity and inclusion and how we all play a part in it.

We provide a range of diversity and inclusion training to help achieve this objective. These are some of the new courses that we have made available over the past year:

### **Unconscious Bias**

This is an externally facilitated course that is currently being rolled out to all managers.

### **Addressing Racial Inequality**

This covers the experience of being Black in the UK workforce today and talks about racial inequality.

### **LGBTQ+ Inclusion in the Workplace**

This is a level 2 certificated programme that covers LGBTQ+ history and culture, language, stereotyping and assumptions relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people in the workplace.

### **Trans Awareness**

This course provides a general overview of trans awareness and addresses some commonly held misconceptions.

## **Management Development Training**

Twenty-six employees successfully completed the LEAD management development programme during the period 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021. (80.7% White British, 11.5% All other ethnic groups, 7.6% Not declared.)

We are currently developing a new e-learning course on Diversity and Inclusion Awareness for managers to help them understand their role in promoting diversity and inclusion. We are planning to develop Anti-Racism training for managers, once the Unconscious Bias training has been completed.



# Employee surveys

We conduct an annual Great Place to Work® survey of all employees and this year, for the first time, we also conducted our own diversity-themed pulse survey.

The Great Place to Work® survey was completed by 901 employees (33% of the workforce). The results measured people's level of satisfaction working for Choice Support. (Appendix 2).

The diversity-themed pulse survey was completed by 351 people (14% of the workforce). (Appendix 2).

The results of both surveys will be used as benchmarks to measure future progress. We have now set business plan targets to narrow the gap, in future surveys, between Black and LGBTQ+ colleagues and the average results for all employees. The results will also help inform our further diversity and inclusion work.

**"I hate injustice, I hate stereotypes, I hate discrimination. People should only ever be judged based on their character, nothing else. And even when judging them on their character, try to understand why they are the way they are. Most times people act out because they are in pain, or because they have never known love. Put yourself in their shoes, teach them how to love, only walk away if you feel you have done your best and can't do any more."**

**Belinda Wabwire Moosbauer**  
Co-chair Diverse Voices



# Employee networks

Over the last year we established our first two employee inclusion networks:

- Diverse Voices, focusing on race and ethnicity issues.
- The LGBTQ+ network, dealing with sexuality and gender identity issues.

Both networks have been meeting monthly and attendance is open to everyone. Attendance has settled at about 40 people per meeting at Diverse Voices and about 10 at the LGBTQ+ network. The Chief Executive and Director of HR attend most meetings and Trustee Diversity Champions and other Directors have attended on occasion. Senior managers have listened to the views of colleagues, answered questions, engaged in sometimes difficult conversations and have taken away actions.

Both networks are still in their early stages, but they are already giving a fresh voice to diversity issues. The meetings have provided an opportunity for people to share experiences and to learn. Both networks have resulted in actions, including:

- Agreement that acting promotion opportunities will be advertised.
- Work to develop alternative methods of resolving informal disputes involving possible discrimination/microaggressions, based on a less adversarial, more collaborative and outcomes-focussed approach.
- The involvement of Black colleagues in developing new diversity and inclusion training.
- Promoting diversity and inclusion more prominently on the Choice Support website.
- Sending an LGBTQ+ themed CEO vlog to the workforce.
- The successful application for Choice Support to take part in the 2021 London Pride parade (though the parade was subsequently cancelled).

We are working to establish two more networks, one for younger colleagues and another for disabled colleagues.

Once all four networks are established, we plan to set up a joint network bringing together representatives from all the groups to discuss common and intersectional issues.







# Our actions

Over the last year our actions have been guided by our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. This was produced following consultation with the workforce and our recognised Trade Unions. It has been regularly updated and shared with our inclusion networks. Progress against the action plan has been reported to the Board of Trustees.

As well as the actions already mentioned we have also:

- Used targeted recruitment to reach a more diverse audience and help recruit three new Trustees. Our Board is now the most diverse it has ever been, with six men and four women. Half of the Board members are white, and half from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The Board agreed our first diversity-themed business plan targets. One of these is to increase the representation of Black, Asian and ethnic minority employees in junior and middle management positions. The second is to narrow the gap between staff survey scores for Black, LGBTQ+ colleagues and the rest of the workforce (Appendix 3).
- Appointed our first Diversity and Inclusion Lead, Helen Choudhury.
- Published our Anti-Racism Statement.
- Published our first Wellbeing Strategy.
- Committed to the Business in the Community, Race at Work Charter and the Halo Code to fight against race-based hair discrimination.
- Retained the Job Centre Plus Disability Confident accreditation and our Mindful Employer status.
- Successfully piloted name blind recruitment and subsequently adopted it for all management recruitment.
- Supported 10 people to take part in the Black, Asian and minority ethnic Management and Leadership Apprenticeship Programme.
- Publicly celebrated a range of important cultural and religious events/festivals including: Chinese New Year, International Women's Day, South Asian Heritage Month, Stephen

Lawrence Day, Eid, Ramadan, Vaisakhi, Pride month and the International Transgender Day of Visibility.

- Created a dedicated Diversity and Inclusion homepage on our website.
- Received a Bronze Award from the Employers Network for Diversity and Inclusion, following their Talent Inclusion & Diversity Evaluation. This was a significant achievement for the first year of our work on Diversity and Inclusion.
- Furthermore, this year we were recognised as a "Best Workplace for Women" by Great Place to Work®.

"I would like to lead by example, not being overly confident in a public role will hopefully inspire like-minded individuals to understand it's OK to be nervous. The group is a safe place and judgement free. Pride Month coming alive, not just a flyer or a poster on a wall, it becomes a real, tangible event showcasing the very best of what we do here at Choice Support with pride!"

Christian Buchan

Chair of LGBTQ+ Inclusion Network



# Next steps

As well as the actions already mentioned, our priorities for the next year include:

1. Use positive action in recruitment and promotion to work towards the achievement of our business plan junior and middle management diversity targets (Appendix 3).
2. Develop additional training material to continue the process of educating people about the importance of diversity and inclusion and their role in helping promote it.
3. Develop a 2-way mentoring programme for people from under-represented groups at senior management level.
4. Develop guidance for use in our selection of suppliers, to ensure that they demonstrate a real commitment to diversity and inclusion.
5. Establish a network of local diversity champions.
6. Complete a review of our policies to ensure that they use inclusive language and are free from any unconscious bias.
7. Produce guidance on the menopause.
8. Encourage more colleagues to provide diversity monitoring information, particularly for religion/belief and sexual orientation.
9. Develop and implement an action plan to address the diversity and inclusion needs of the people we support and the services that we provide.

**"I was excited when the opportunity to take the Leadership and Management course came around. This course is only the beginning of an upward journey in my career."**

Linda Mudenda

Acting Team Leader, Wakefield





# Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. We hope you have found it informative. We will publish a similar report annually, to demonstrate our progress against our diversity and inclusion targets and where we still need to improve.

We are grateful for the support of our Trustees and Directors, who all fully support our work on diversity and inclusion. We would also like to thank the members of our inclusion networks for their help and commitment to this important work.

We encourage all colleagues to support this work, which will benefit everyone. We welcome your ideas and feedback, and we hope you speak up if you don't think that we are keeping our promises.

Mark Ferry

Director of HR



Helen Choudhury

Diversity and Inclusion  
Lead

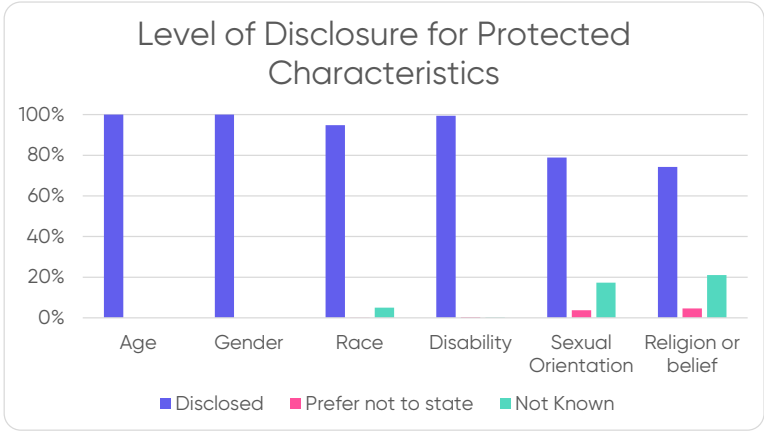


# Appendix 1

## Our workforce

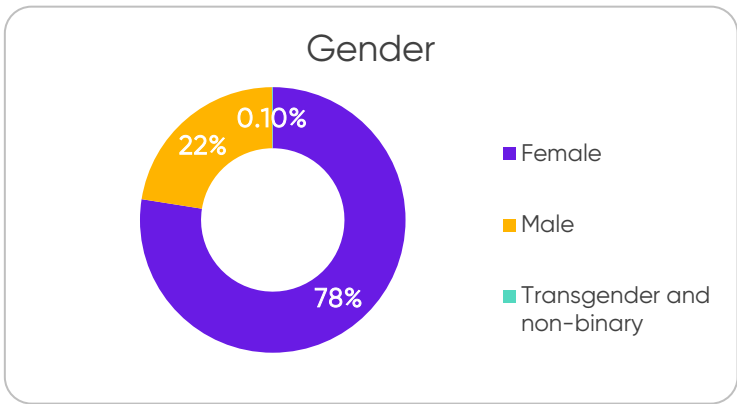
On 1 April 2021 there were 2795 people working for Choice Support, including 854 casual workers.

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

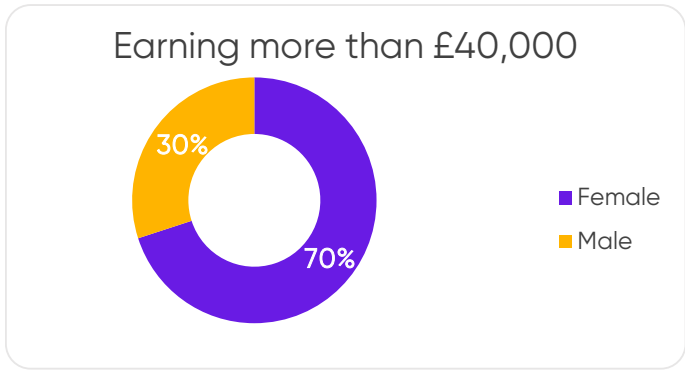
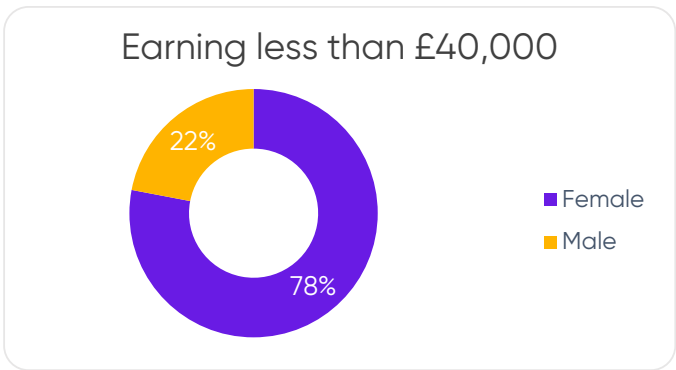


## Gender

The gender profile of our workforce is as follows:



The proportion of the workforce earning less or more than a full-time equivalent salary of £40,000 per annum by gender is:



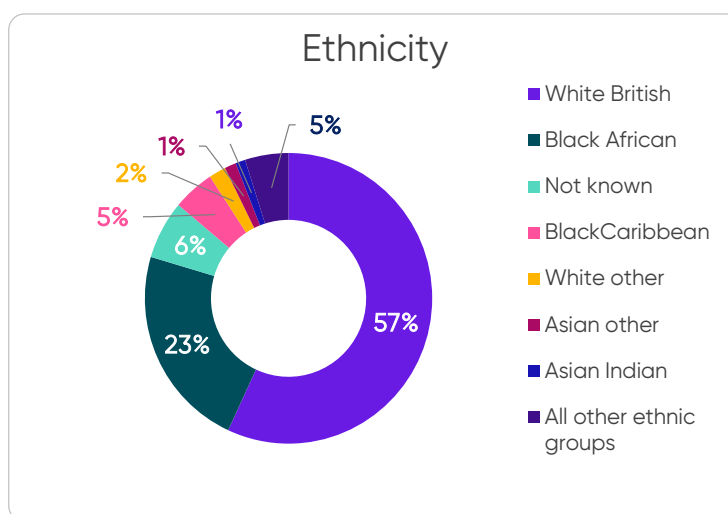
\*Please note that in some charts the categories of diversity data have been aggregated for presentational purposes. The full data is available and is used in management reporting.

Like all large employers, Choice Support is required to report our gender pay. This is the difference between the average rate of pay for all male and female employees. It does not mean that men and women are paid different rates of pay for the same job (which would be against the law). Rather, it reflects structural differences in the workforce – for example, more men employed in senior positions.

Choice Support's gender pay gap is 5.9%, which means that on average men are paid 5.9% more than women. According to the Office for National Statistics the average gender pay gap for all employers in the UK in 2020 was 15.5%.

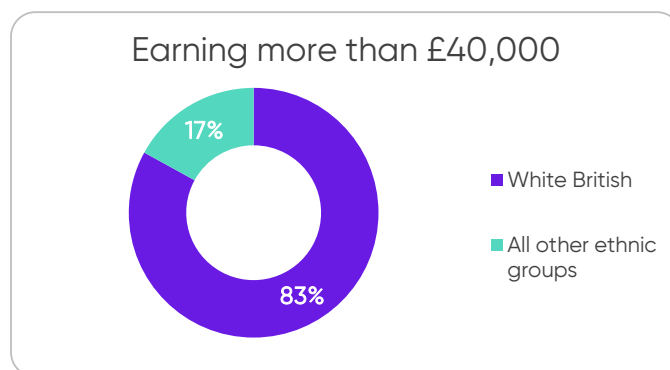
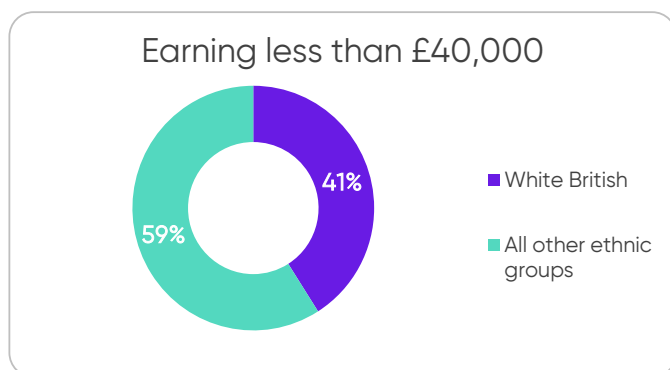
## Ethnicity

The ethnicity profile of the workforce is as follows:



The ethnic diversity of the workforce varies significantly in different parts of the country. For example, in Medway 91% of the workforce is White British, while in the London Borough of Greenwich 60% of the workforce is Black African.

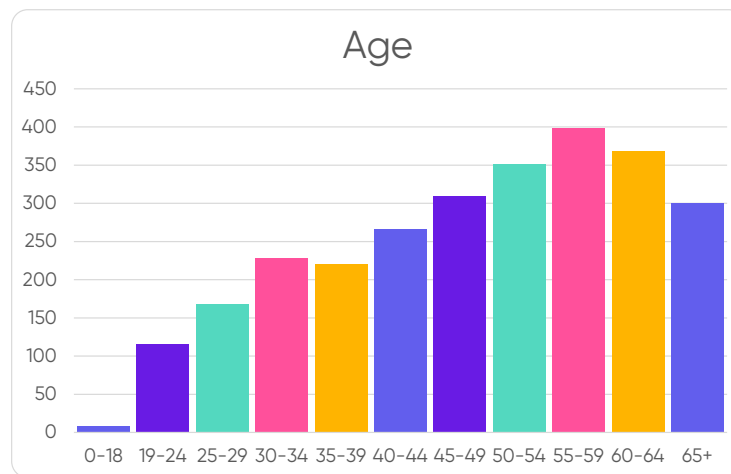
The proportion of the workforce earning less or more than a full-time equivalent salary of £40,000 per annum by race is:





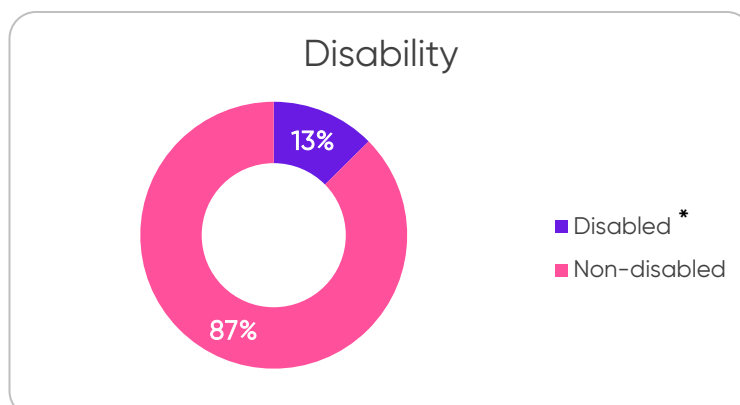
## Age

The age profile of the workforce is as follows:



## Disability

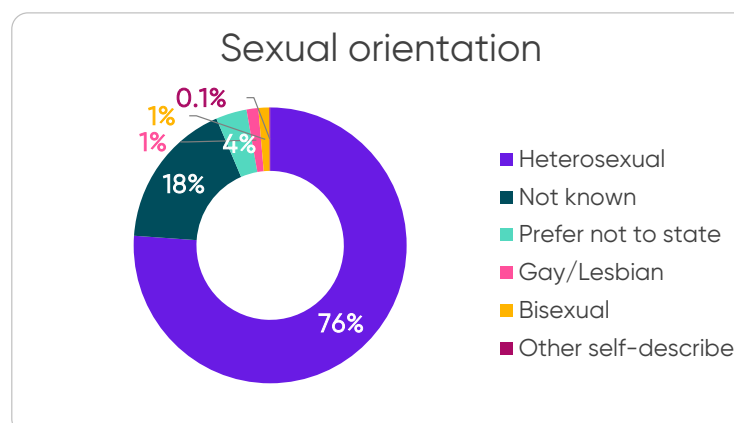
We currently employ 351 people who describe themselves as having a disability, which is nearly 13% of our total workforce. The disability profile of the workforce is as follows:



\*This includes 121 people who work as Experts by Experience and 87 people who work in supported employment projects.

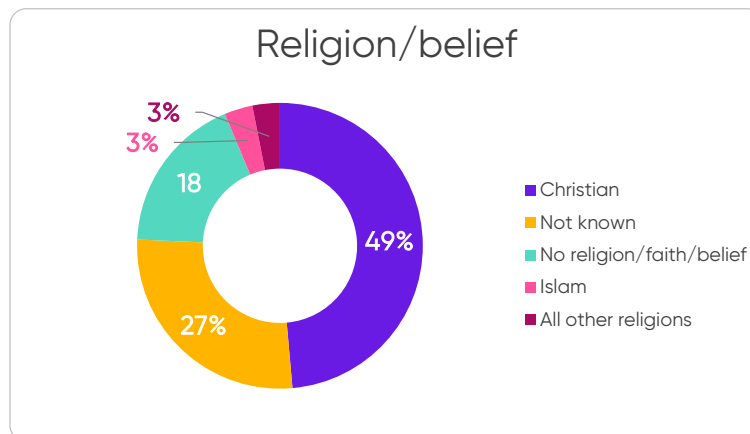
## Sexual orientation

The sexual orientation profile of the workforce is as follows:



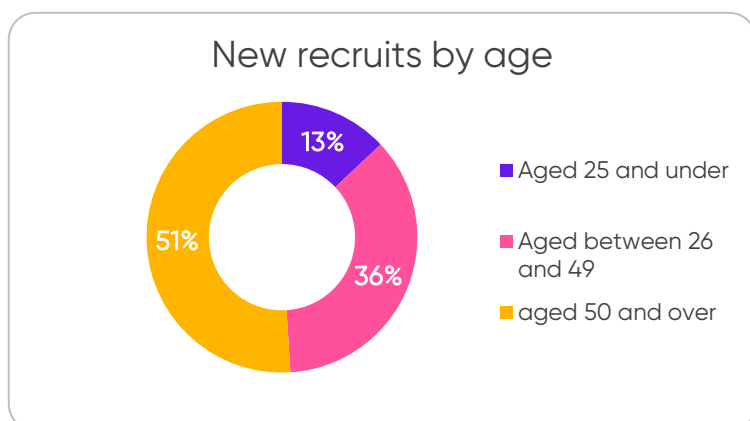
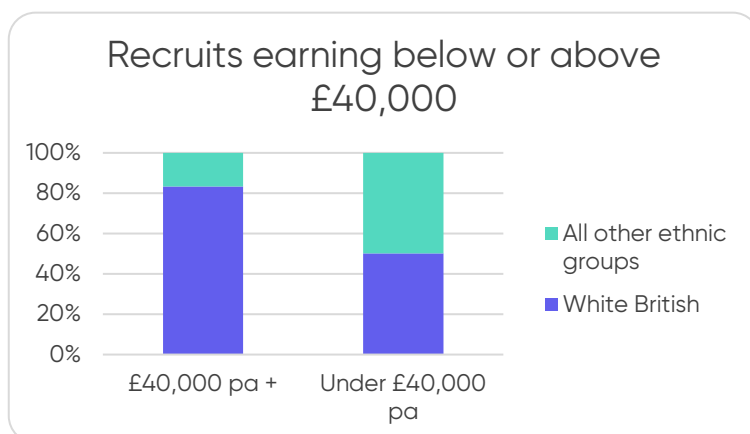
## Religion/Belief

The religion/belief profile of the workforce is as follows:

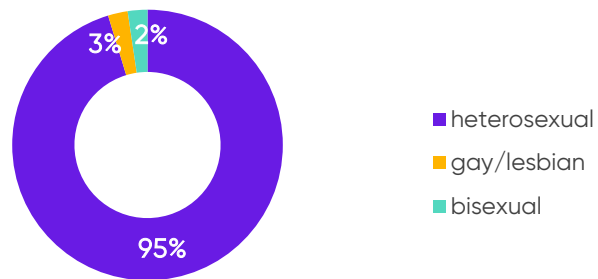


## Recruitment

In the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 we recruited a total of 661 people:



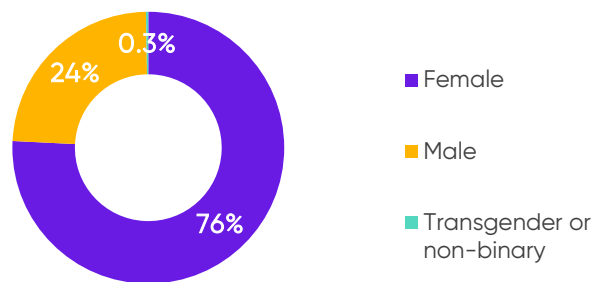
New recruits by sexual orientation



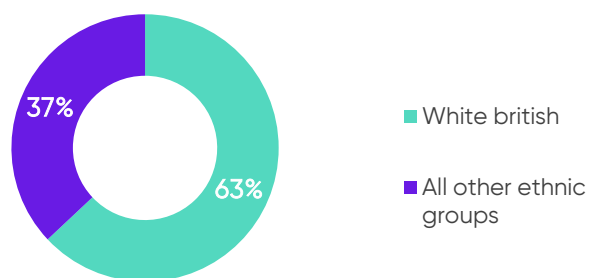
## Employee relations

In the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 60 people were subject to formal disciplinary action:

Disciplinary action by gender



Disciplinary action by ethnicity

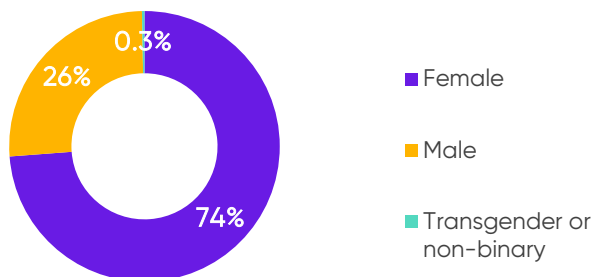




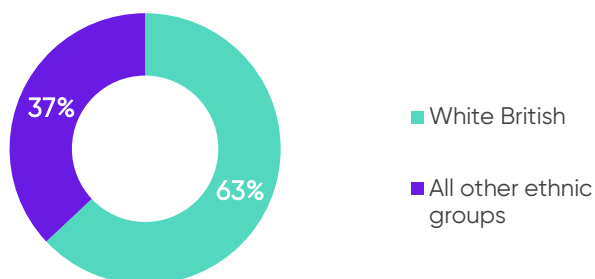
## Employee turnover

In the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 a total of 329 people resigned from their employment with Choice Support.

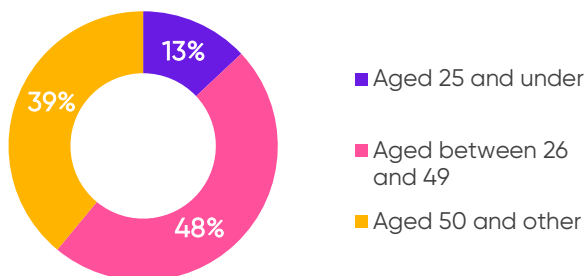
Employee turnover by gender



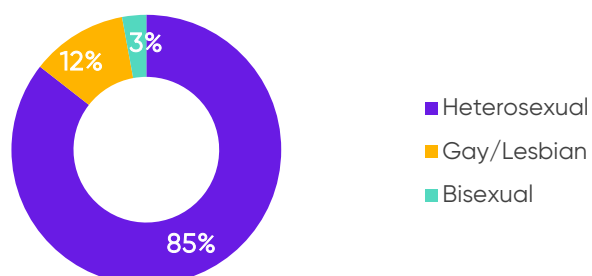
Employee turnover by ethnicity



Employee turnover by age



Employee turnover by sexual orientation



## Learning and development

### Diversity and Inclusion Training

40% of managers have now completed our new one day Unconscious Bias workshop.

Further dates are booked with the aim that all managers complete the training by November 2021.

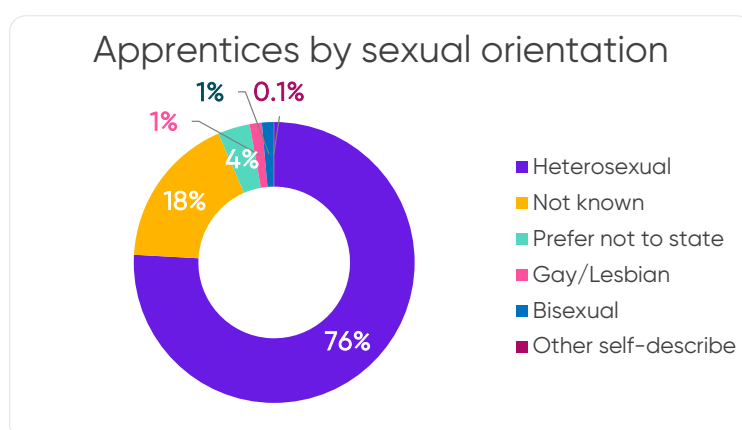
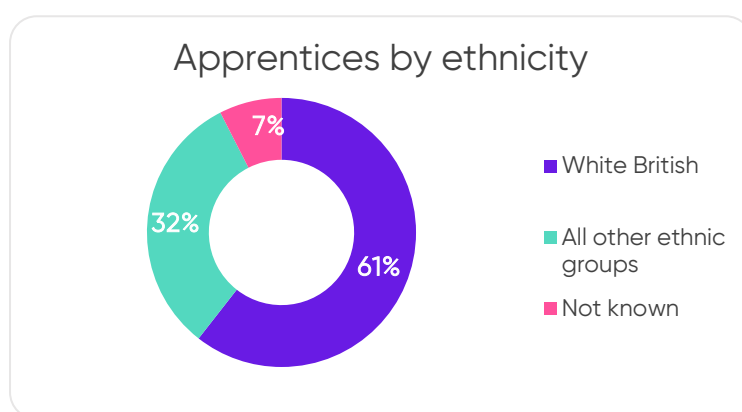
93% of the workforce have completed Equality and Diversity Awareness e-learning.

Sixty-six people have completed Trans Awareness e-learning.

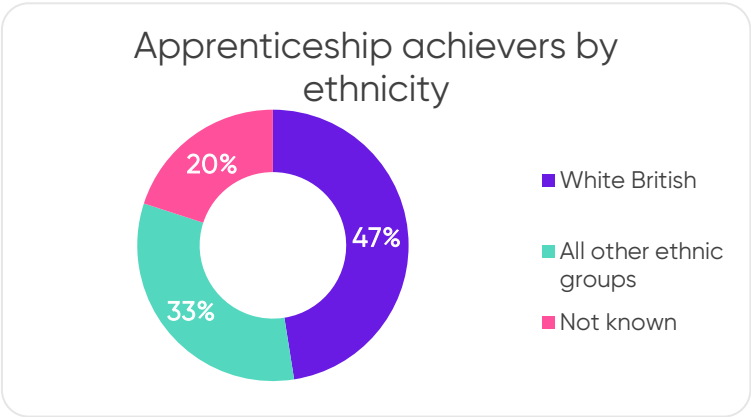
Three people have successfully completed their level 2 LGBTQ+ Inclusion in the Workplace Certificate.

### Apprenticeships

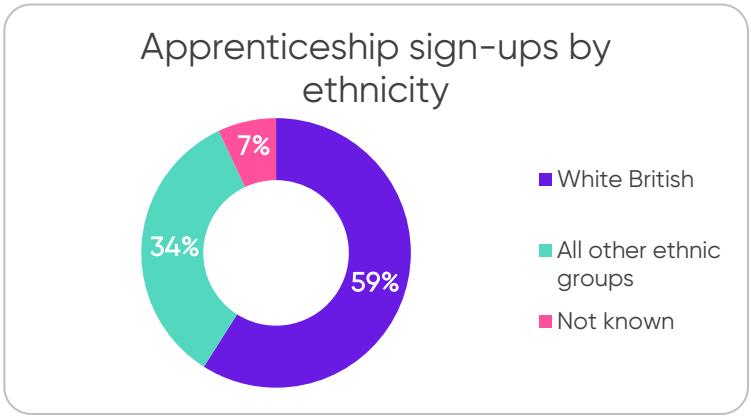
At present we have 119 employees on an apprenticeship programme.



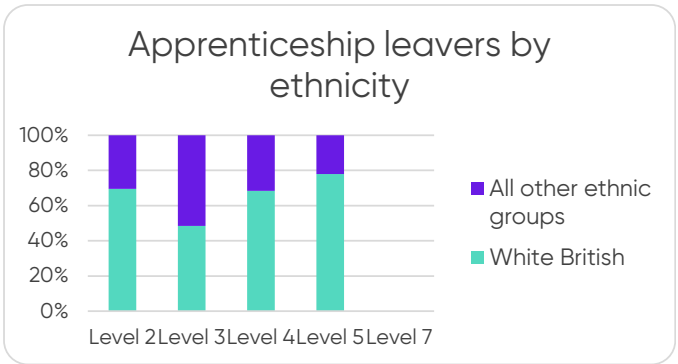
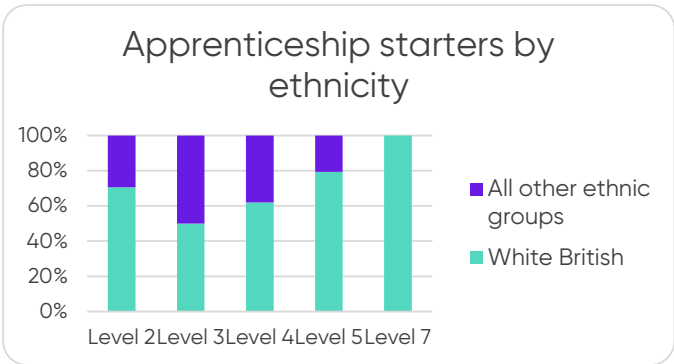
Forty employees successfully completed their apprenticeship programmes during the period 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021.



There have been 100 new sign-ups onto the apprenticeship programmes between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021.



The ethnicity of apprenticeship sign-ups (starters) and those who have left Choice Support or the programme (leavers) by level of qualification is as follows:



# Appendix 2

## The Great Place to Work® survey

- Young colleagues were significantly less satisfied working for Choice Support than their older peers, with an average score 12% lower than for all employees.
- The results from men were 2% lower than the average for all employees.
- Black employees were significantly more satisfied than their peers of other ethnicities. Out of 73 questions, Black colleagues scored 34 more positively by more than 5%, 21 more positively by 1-5%, 5 questions were scored the same, 26 more negatively by 1-5% and 2 more negatively by more than 5%.
- The question that Black colleagues scored lowest was, "People here are treated fairly regardless of their race". This was 13% 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 3 questions more positively by more than 5%, 6 more positively by 1-5%, 6 questions were scored the same, 9 more negatively by 1-5% and 29 more negatively by more than 5%.

## Choice Support diversity-themed pulse survey

- The diversity-themed pulse survey was completed by 351 people (14% of the workforce.)
- Men scored on average 3% lower than women.
- LGBTQ+ colleagues scored 4% lower than their non-LGBTQ+ colleagues.
- The results from disabled people and older colleagues were more positive than for the workforce as a whole.
- The average results for Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues were lower than for their white colleagues by 15%.
- Twenty-five people said that they had experienced discrimination at work in the past year. Seven people said that this was due to their race. Ten people said that their manager discriminated against them and seven people said that it was colleagues.
- The results of both surveys will be used as benchmarks to measure future progress. We have now set business plan targets to narrow the gap, in future surveys, between Black and LGBTQ+ colleagues and the average results for all employees. The results will also help inform our further diversity and inclusion work.

# 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.	Annual report.	Report published.	Report published.	Report published.

