

Greater Manchester
Housing Providers



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The DICE Report

Diversity and Inclusion Across
Greater Manchester Housing Providers

March 2026

Contents

3	Foreword	16	Change Over Time	33	Rochdale Boroughwide Housing: LGBTQ+ Pioneer Status
4	Key Findings	16	Overview of Trend Data	34	Riverside: Race Equality Matters Trailblazer
5	Introduction	17	Patterns Observed 2020–2025	35	Southway Housing Trust: Conscious Inclusion
6	About the Survey	22	Conclusion	36	GMHP EDI Leads Group: Disability Pride Month
6	Survey Methodology	23	Case Studies	37	Bolton at Home: Peer Navigators
7	Participating Organisations	24	Irwell Valley Homes: Re examining Colleague Benefits	38	Great Places: Partnership with Pure Innovations
7	Data Quality Considerations	25	Arawak Walton: EDI Pledge & Shadow Board	39	GMHCA/GMHP/GM Race Equality Panel: Racial Inequalities Research
7	Terminology	26	BOOST: GMHP’s Leadership Transformation Programme	40	GMHP: The 20% Movement
8	Diversity Across Greater Manchester Housing Providers	27	First Choice Homes Oldham: Leaving Care Pledge	41	Driving Inclusive Change Together: The Work of the GMHP EDI Leads Group
8	Age	28	ForHousing: Reasonable Adjustments & Inclusive Services	42	Appendix One: Diversity Profiles by Organisation and Characteristic
10	Gender	29	Jigsaw Homes Group: Time to Talk Allyship Sessions	48	Acknowledgements
12	Disability	30	MSV Housing & Manchester Camerata: Music in Mind	48	Contact Information
13	Ethnicity	31	Onward Homes: Supporting Neurodiverse Colleagues		
14	Sexual Orientation				
15	Gender Identity				

Foreword



I am pleased to introduce this year's DICE Report—our third collective assessment of equality, diversity and inclusion across Greater Manchester's housing providers.

This report arrives at an important moment for our sector. The social and economic landscape in which we operate continues to shift, and the responsibility we hold—both to our communities and to our colleagues—has never been clearer. Good data, honest reflection and shared accountability are essential if we are to make meaningful progress.

What this year's findings show is a sector that is increasingly diverse, committed to improvement, and driven by a strong moral purpose. Across our organisations, thousands of colleagues bring a broad mix of backgrounds, identities and lived experience to their roles. This diversity strengthens our services, supports better decision making

and ensures we remain connected to the communities we serve.

At the same time, the data highlights a set of persistent and important challenges. Representation at senior levels continues to lag behind both the wider workforce and our customer base—particularly in relation to ethnicity, disability and age. These gaps matter. They influence who shapes strategy, whose perspectives are centred in governance, and the confidence with which our organisations can demonstrate inclusive leadership. If we are serious about delivering equitable, responsive and person centred services, then our leadership structures must reflect the people and communities who rely on us most.

This year's analysis also reinforces the vital role of high quality data. Too many gaps remain—whether through incomplete disclosure, inconsistent categorisation or differing approaches to collection. These limitations reduce our ability to monitor progress, compare performance and evidence change over time. Strengthening our data practices is not simply an operational task; it is an essential foundation for fairness, transparency and good governance.

Despite these challenges, there is much to be encouraged by. We see organisations

demonstrating innovation, learning from one another and investing in targeted interventions. We see improvements emerging—sometimes gradual, sometimes significant—across a range of protected characteristics. And we see a partnership demonstrating a shared commitment to inclusion, grounded in action rather than aspiration.

As leaders, we each hold a responsibility to create environments where colleagues feel valued, respected and able to thrive. This report gives us the evidence we need to understand where we are, where progress is being made, and where our efforts must intensify. It is both a celebration of the strides we have taken and a reminder of the work still ahead.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this year's report - colleagues who collected and submitted data, those who champion inclusive practice within their organisations, and the DICE Group for its continued leadership. Together, we are building a more inclusive future for our workforce, our customers and the communities of Greater Manchester.

Sasha Deepwell

Chief Executive
Irwell Valley Homes

Key Findings

The 2026 DICE benchmarking analysis presents a picture of a sector that is increasingly diverse at the workforce level but continues to experience persistent and structural disparities - particularly at senior organisational tiers.

The following headline findings summarise the most significant themes emerging from the analysis.

Diversity decreases with organisational seniority

Across all protected characteristics, representation becomes less diverse at Board and Leadership Team levels. These gaps are especially marked for ethnicity, disability, age and gender identity. While some volatility is expected due to small cohort sizes, the overall pattern is consistent, underscoring the need for more inclusive leadership pipelines.

Workforce diversity broadly reflects Greater Manchester's population

At workforce level, representation for gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender

identity is largely aligned with GM benchmarks. However, younger people (16–24) and disabled colleagues remain notably under represented, pointing to barriers in recruitment, early career entry routes and disclosure.

Customers are older, more likely to be female and more likely to be disabled

Customer demographics differ significantly from internal profiles. Customers include a much higher proportion of disabled people and people aged 65+, and a greater proportion of women. This mismatch has important implications for service design, accessibility and person centred delivery.

Data quality remains a major limitation

High rates of “unknown” and “prefer not to say” responses, varying category definitions, and inconsistent participation across years reduce the reliability of comparisons and trend analysis. Data for small cohorts such as Boards and Leadership Teams is particularly sensitive, with even a single change in membership significantly affecting representation figures.

Trend data shows progress—but unevenly

Comparisons with 2020, 2022 and 2025 datasets show encouraging signs of improvement in ethnic diversity, gender representation and disability disclosure—mainly at workforce level. However, progress is inconsistent across organisations, with some acting as clear leaders, others improving gradually, and some unable to evidence meaningful change due to data gaps.

Representation gaps have practical consequences

A lack of diversity at senior levels affects which voices shape strategy, whose lived experiences inform decision making, and how effectively organisations can lead on inclusion. It also impacts trust, cultural insight and the ability to deliver services that reflect the needs of diverse communities.

Strengthening data and talent pipelines will be critical

The findings highlight a need for:

- » more inclusive recruitment and progression pathways,
- » better early career and mid career development routes,
- » improved disclosure environments,
- » and consistent, inclusive data collection practices across the partnership.

Introduction

Greater Manchester Housing Providers (GMHP) is a partnership of 26 Registered Providers working together to deliver and manage safe, warm and affordable homes across Greater Manchester. Collectively, we provide homes to one in five GM residents and are responsible for more than 250,000 properties.

Our partnership enables members to share good practice, learn from one another, and strengthen our collective voice at both regional and national levels—ensuring that the needs and experiences of tenants and colleagues are heard and understood.

In 2020, the Diversity, Inclusion, Community Cohesion & Equalities (DICE) group—one of GMHP's subgroups—published the findings of their first EDI benchmarking exercise. This baseline report provided an initial snapshot of workforce diversity across member organisations and highlighted

the work already underway to address inequalities and improve representation. It also helped identify priority areas for collective and organisational action.

This report marks the third in our series. As in 2020 and 2023, we have again asked members to submit their diversity data so we can build a clearer picture of our workforce and assess whether the actions taken over recent years are having an impact.

Alongside the data analysis, the report includes a series of case studies that highlight the wide range of initiatives underway across individual organisations, as well as examples of collective action across the partnership. Together, these insights help illustrate how providers are putting inclusion into practice on the ground and sets a foundation for understanding the strengths, gaps and emerging trends shaping diversity and inclusion across Greater Manchester's housing sector.



About the survey

The DICE 2026 benchmarking exercise builds on the foundations established in the 2020 and 2023 reports, bringing together data from housing providers across Greater Manchester to create a shared, sector wide picture of diversity and inclusion.

By gathering comparable data on colleagues, leadership teams, boards and customer demographics, the survey provides a common evidence base that enables housing providers to reflect on their own performance while contributing to a wider understanding of representation across the region.

Survey methodology

To support consistency and comparability across organisations, participating providers were asked to submit their data using a standardised proforma covering three internal cohorts—Board, Leadership Team, and Workforce—alongside demographic information for customers.

The survey collects information across six equality characteristics: age, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Where possible, organisational data is compared with external benchmarks using data from the 2021 Office for National Statistics (ONS) Census for Greater Manchester.



Participating Organisations

Twenty providers submitted data for this year's exercise, representing a substantial proportion of the GM housing sector.

Arawak Walton

Bolton at Home

First Choice Homes Oldham

Great Places Housing Group

Irwell Valley Homes

Jigsaw

L&Q

MSV

One Manchester

Onward Homes

Rochdale Boroughwide Housing

Regenda

Riverside

Salix Homes

Southway

Stockport Homes

Together Housing Group

Wythenshawe Community Housing Group

Wigan Council

Your Housing Group

Data quality considerations

While the proforma ensures a shared framework for data submission, organisations naturally vary in how they collect and categorise their data, reflecting different systems, approaches and stages of development.

Not all organisations were able to provide full datasets across all characteristics or cohorts and some have “unknown” or “prefer not to say” categories at higher rates than others. Additionally, providers do not always align with ONS classifications or use the same terminology, making aggregation more complex and sometimes requiring careful judgement about how categories map to one another.

As a result, the information submitted may differ slightly between providers, shaped by the methods they use and how they define and record demographic information.

Participation levels also affect the breadth of the analysis, and while the dataset is robust, differences in who participates each year influence the comparability of trends over time.

These limitations do not diminish the value of the dataset. Rather, they highlight areas where collective effort is required to improve data quality and support more inclusive and consistent data collection practices.

Terminology

We recognise that identity is highly personal and often far more complex than the tick box categories typically used in data collection. These categories, while necessary for consistency and reporting, can never fully capture the breadth of peoples lived experiences or the ways in which individuals understand and describe their own identities. For many, characteristics such as disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or ethnicity do not fit neatly into predefined boxes, and the language people use to describe themselves is continually evolving.

Some individuals may not recognise themselves in the categories provided, may feel uneasy about sharing certain aspects of their identity, or may interpret the categories differently depending on the context. As a result, the framework used to capture diversity data has limitations, and the analysis may not fully reflect the true diversity of the workforce.

These nuances should be kept in mind when interpreting the findings presented in this report. The data provides an important and valuable picture of representation across the sector—but it is inevitably a simplified one. Understanding these limitations reinforces the need for sensitive, person centred approaches to data collection and for ongoing dialogue with colleagues and customers about how identity is recorded, represented and understood.

Diversity across Greater Manchester Housing Providers

This section examines representation across key characteristics by comparing the Board, Leadership Team and Workforce with Customer demographics and the wider Greater Manchester (GM) population.

Using data on age, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, it highlights where the sector aligns with local demographics and where notable gaps persist.

The analysis reveals several recurring patterns, most notably a reduction in diversity at more senior organisational levels compared with both the wider workforce and the customer base. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution, as the small size of Board and Leadership Team cohorts means that even minor changes in membership can significantly affect the overall profile. Nonetheless, the insights emphasise the importance of understanding how well organisational structures do—or do

not—reflect the communities that housing providers serve.

Appendix One provides a detailed breakdown by organisation and diversity characteristic for those who submitted data. Presenting this information at an individual organisational level enables providers to understand how their own workforce composition compares not only with sector-wide averages but also with peers of a similar size or profile. This level of transparency supports more meaningful self assessment, helping organisations identify where their strengths lie and where targeted action may be needed. Presenting the data in this way also encourages shared learning across the partnership, enabling organisations to draw insights from one another and strengthen collective efforts to improve equality, diversity and inclusion across Greater Manchester.

Age

Age distribution demonstrates some of the most striking structural differences across organisational tiers. Both the Board and Leadership Teams are heavily concentrated in

the 45–64 age band, significantly exceeding the proportion of this group in both GM and customer populations. The Leadership Team is particularly skewed—more than three quarters of its members fall into this age category, representing over twice the proportion typically seen in GM.

This pattern is not unexpected. Senior leadership roles typically require substantial sector knowledge, professional experience and long-term progression, all of which contribute to older age profiles at senior levels. Leadership pathways within housing tend to evolve over extended careers, and limited turnover at the top means vacancies arise infrequently. As a result, individuals often reach Board or Leadership Team roles only after many years of accumulated expertise.

At the same time, these patterns highlight the importance of future workforce planning. Younger colleagues may face fewer opportunities to access development pathways or progress into senior roles, particularly where internal pipelines are

not clearly defined or where organisational structures offer limited mobility. This can restrict the sector’s ability to build a strong, age diverse succession pipeline. Strengthening early career pathways, supporting mid career progression and widening access to leadership development programmes is therefore essential to ensure that the next generation of leaders is able to move through the organisation and contribute to long term sustainability.

The Workforce shows a more balanced age profile but still under represents younger workers aged 16–24 compared with GM. Whereas 13% of GM residents fall into this younger group, fewer than 5% of employees do, and none appear at either Board or Leadership Team level.

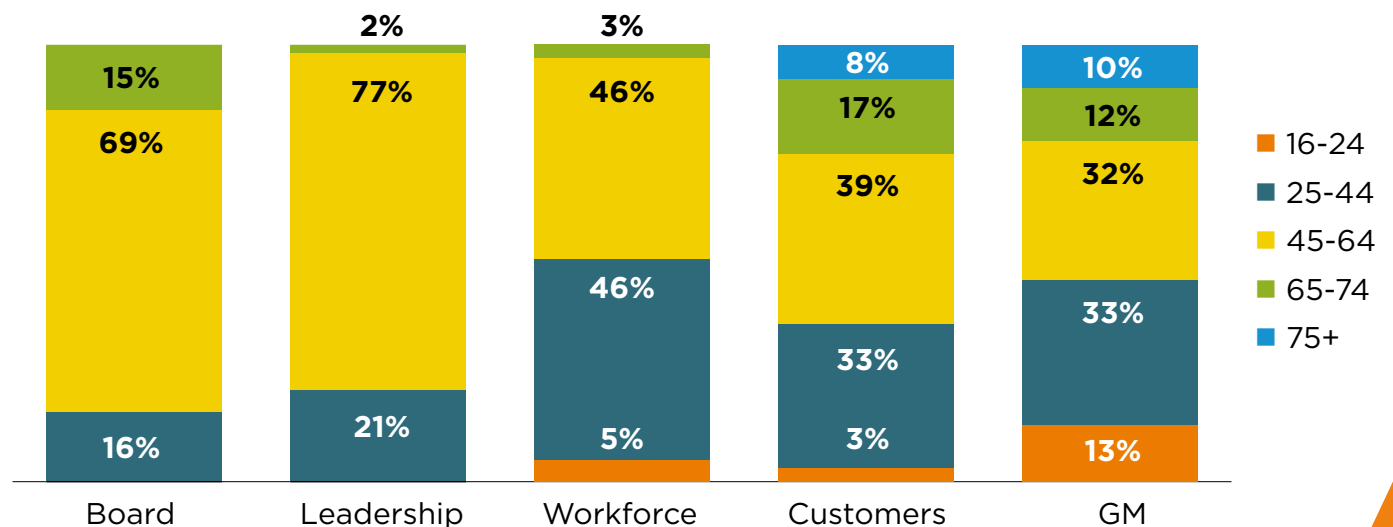
Several factors contribute to this under representation. Entry level roles within the housing sector often require prior experience, specific qualifications, or customer facing skills that younger people may not yet have had the opportunity to develop. Apprenticeships, traineeships and early career pathways, while growing, remain limited in number across many organisations, reducing accessible routes into employment for younger candidates. In addition, some roles—particularly those in repairs and maintenance—require technical training or accredited qualifications that can take several years to obtain, creating a natural barrier for younger applicants.

Younger workers may also be less aware of the breadth of careers available within social housing, as the sector is not always strongly promoted in schools, colleges or early career careers advice. Combined with competition from other sectors perceived as offering clearer progression routes or higher starting salaries, this can reduce the pipeline of younger applicants entering the workforce. As a result, the age profile of the workforce continues to reflect a concentration in mid career and later career groups, highlighting the need to expand early talent opportunities and strengthen outreach to younger people.

Customers display a notable concentration of older age groups, particularly those aged

65 and over. This means that customer facing services may be heavily shaped and delivered by teams that are not fully representative of the customer base they support. This mismatch has important implications for how services are designed and experienced. Without a workforce that reflects the perspectives of older customers, organisations may unintentionally overlook design choices, engagement approaches or support pathways that would better meet their needs. Strengthening training, inclusive design practices and intergenerational awareness within teams is therefore essential to ensure that services remain person centred, accessible and attuned to the realities of an ageing customer population.

Age Group



Gender

Gender representation shows different dynamics depending on organisational tier.

Boards remain slightly male dominated and does not reflect the strongly female customer base which is strongly skewed towards females. Leadership Teams, however, are closer to gender parity, suggesting a more balanced profile and indicating progress toward a more equitable leadership structure at this tier.

The workforce displays a gender profile that aligns closely with that of GM, with females making up just over half of all colleagues. Despite this, the workforce remains notably more male than the customer base, in which females constitute 61% of the population served across participating organisations. This difference is influenced in part by the composition of certain roles within the sector that tend to be more male dominated. Trades and technical roles—such as electricians, joiners, gas engineers and multi skilled operatives—continue to attract

predominantly male applicants, shaped by long standing gender norms within vocational training and apprenticeships. These teams often make up a substantial proportion of the overall workforce, which amplifies their influence on gender distribution. In addition, some providers have in house repairs services while others outsource them, meaning the degree of male dominance varies by organisational model but is still evident in the aggregated dataset.

The gender profile of the workforce therefore reflects a combination of sector wide recruitment patterns, occupational stereotypes and the historical under representation of women in certain technical fields. Addressing this imbalance will require continued focus on inclusive recruitment, targeted outreach, and the development of pathways that encourage more women into repairs, maintenance and other operational roles.

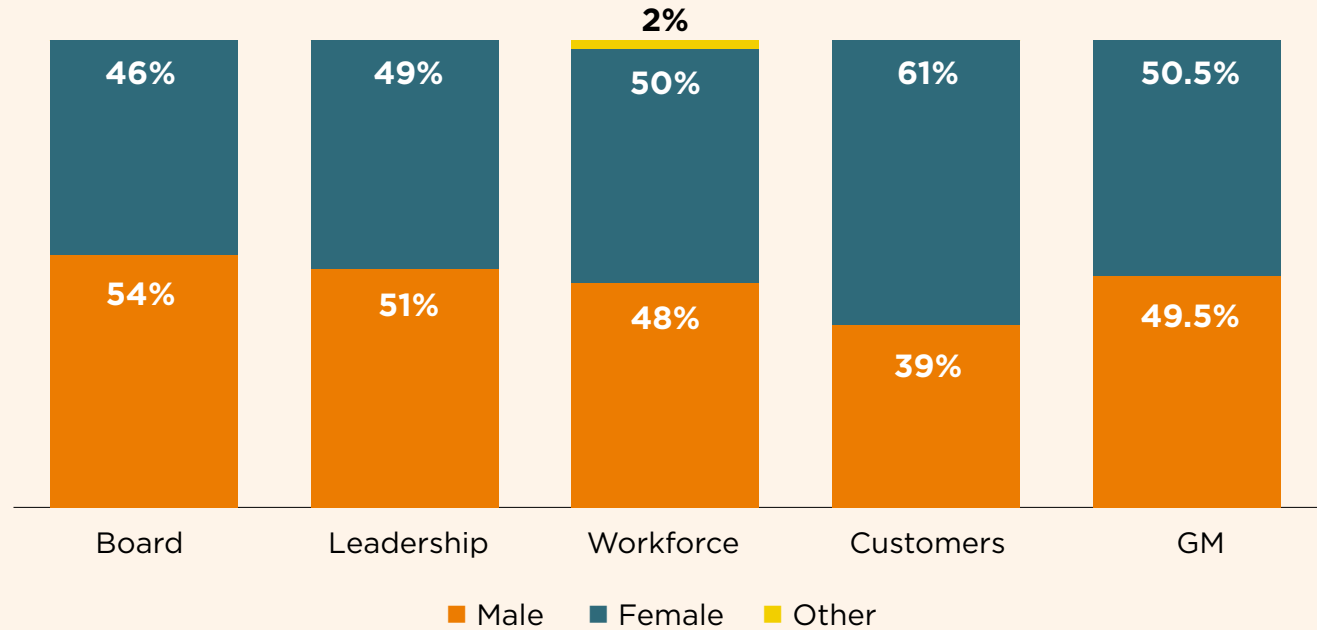


The data also shows a small proportion of workforce colleagues identifying as a gender other than male or female—higher than the proportions recorded among customers and within the wider GM population.

This does not necessarily indicate that customers don't identify in these ways; rather, it often reflects limitations in how data is collected. In some organisations, existing systems may not support recording identities outside predefined fields, or legacy records may not have been updated to include more inclusive category options. For GM population data, the 2021 Census records sex using a binary classification and captures gender identity only through a separate, voluntary question, which limits the completeness of the dataset.

These constraints should be considered when interpreting the findings. Patterns within the customer data may reflect the limitations of collection processes as much as the actual diversity of the population served. This reinforces the need to continue modernising and improving data collection practices so that all individuals—whether colleagues or customers—can see their identities represented accurately and respectfully.

Gender



Disability

Disability representation shows one of the most significant gaps between internal organisational groups and the customer population. Customers include a far higher proportion of disabled people—26% overall—substantially exceeding levels in the wider GM population and surpassing representation across all internal cohorts.

Within organisations, the workforce includes just over 10% disabled colleagues, with representation falling further at Leadership Team level (8%). Board representation is slightly higher at 13%, but still below the GM benchmark of 17.3%.

These figures indicate that disabled customers are interacting with providers whose leadership and workforce do not reflect their lived experiences to the same extent as the communities they serve. In this context, ensuring that colleagues receive appropriate training becomes even more important. Without direct representation organisations must rely on robust, evidence informed learning to build understanding, challenge assumptions and equip staff with the knowledge and confidence needed to support disabled customers well. Strengthening disability awareness, inclusive communication skills and practical

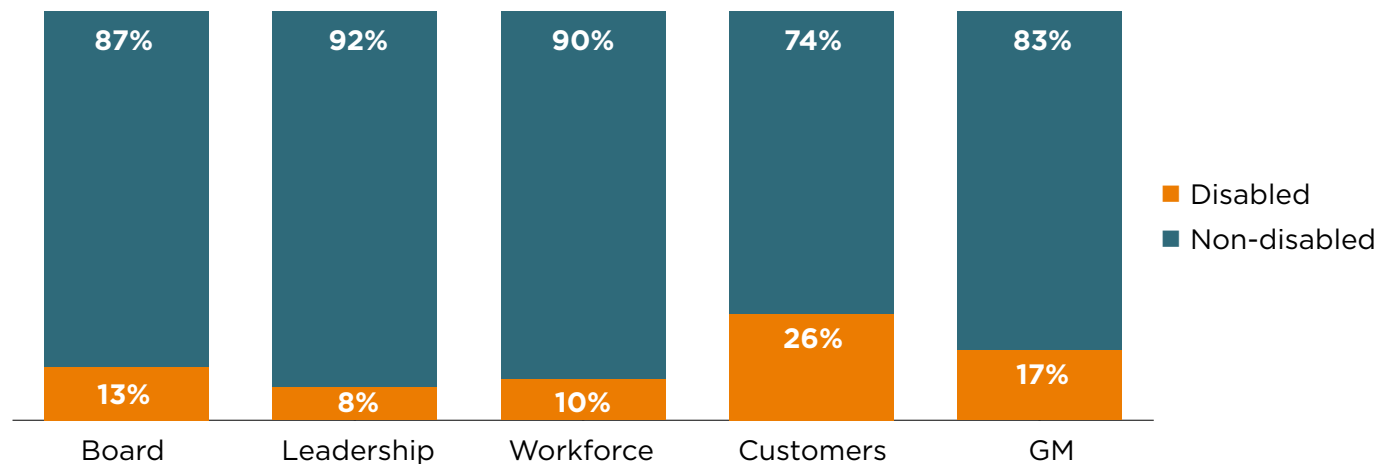
understanding of reasonable adjustments can help reduce the risks created by representation gaps and ensure that services remain responsive to individual needs.

It is important to emphasise that disability data is shaped by variations in how organisations collect, define and record this information. Such inconsistencies mean that differences between organisations should be interpreted carefully. Reported levels may reflect genuine variation in workforce or customer profiles, but they may equally be influenced by inconsistent category definitions, differences in disclosure rates, or variation in when and how individuals are asked about disability.

Improving the completeness, consistency and clarity of disability data across the sector will therefore be essential for reliable benchmarking and for developing a more accurate understanding of disabled representation and need.

These constraints should be considered when interpreting the findings. Patterns within the customer data may reflect the limitations of collection processes as much as the actual diversity of the population served. This reinforces the need to continue modernising and improving data collection practices so that all individuals—whether colleagues or customers—can see their identities represented accurately and respectfully.

Disability



Ethnicity

The ethnicity profile shows clear differences in representation across organisational tiers when compared with both customers and the GM population.

The Board’s ethnic profile broadly mirrors the GM population; however, Leadership Teams depart sharply from both GM and customer profiles. More than nine in ten Leadership Team members identify as White, a proportion significantly higher than either comparator group, and this shift is accompanied by noticeably lower Asian and Black representation within the Leadership Team.

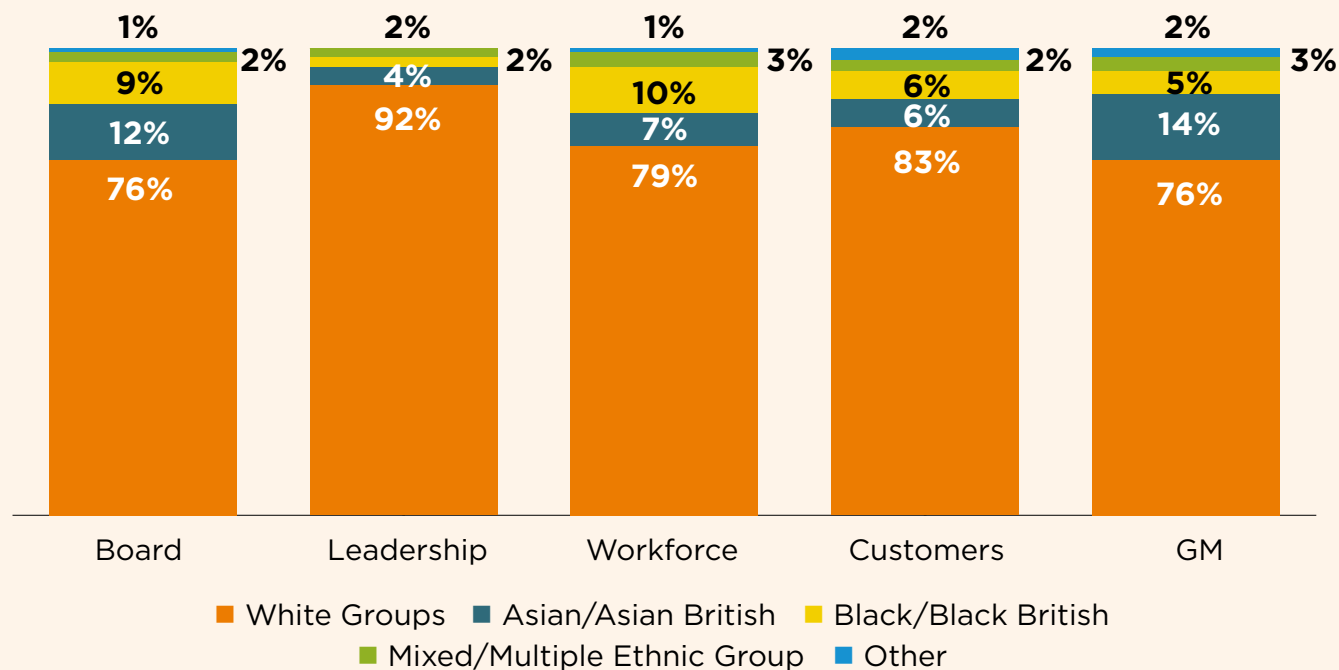
By contrast, the workforce presents a more balanced and mixed picture. It includes higher representation from Black ethnic groups, alongside a small but meaningful presence of colleagues from Mixed ethnic backgrounds. Asian representation, however, remains below the GM average at all internal levels.

The overall trend demonstrates that ethnic diversity decreases as organisational seniority increases, with Leadership Teams emerging as the group least reflective of the regional population or the organisation’s customer demographics. Achieving diversity within

these senior cohorts is inherently more challenging due to their small size; even a single appointment or departure can disproportionately shift the overall profile. This means that while the patterns are important, they should be interpreted with an understanding of how small numbers can magnify apparent differences—yet the underlying issue of limited representation remains significant.

These patterns have clear implications for how organisations interpret and respond to the experiences of ethnically diverse communities and underline the importance of strengthening inclusive recruitment and progression practices, improving the visibility of diverse role models, and actively developing leadership pipelines that reflect the communities providers serve.

Ethnicity



Sexual orientation

In relation to sexual orientation, internal profiles show slightly higher LGBTQ+ representation than recorded within GM, with Leadership Teams exhibiting the highest level of LGBTQ+ identification among the organisational layers. Both the workforce and the Board also report LGBTQ+ representation above the GM benchmark.

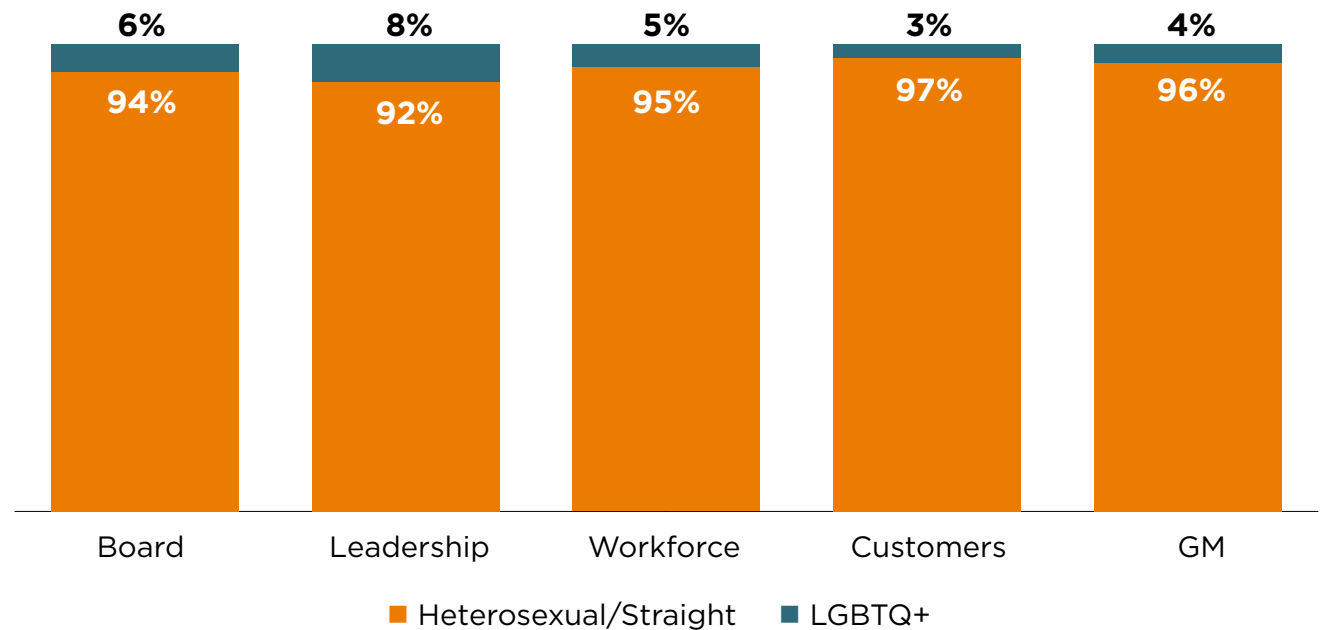
This suggests an internal environment where LGBTQ+ colleagues may feel comparatively more able or willing to disclose their identity.

In contrast, the customer population records lower LGBTQ+ representation compared with GM, indicating a divergence between internal diversity levels and those seen externally among service users. This difference could reflect the sector’s relative openness around sexual orientation internally and wider societal trends in LGBTQ+ visibility and disclosure. Although the differences are not large, the pattern illustrates how internal diversity on sexual orientation is somewhat ahead of regional norms, while the customer base represents a more traditional demographic profile in this respect.

These patterns have practical implications for service delivery. A workforce with comparatively higher LGBTQ+ visibility may be well placed to champion inclusive practice, challenge stereotyping and model open cultures internally. However, the gap between internal and customer diversity also highlights the need for sensitivity in how services, communications and engagement approaches are designed—ensuring they feel

relevant and respectful to customer groups who may be less likely to disclose, less visible in the data, or less familiar with LGBTQ+ inclusive language. Strengthening awareness and maintaining inclusive practice across all teams is therefore essential to ensuring that service delivery and customer interactions remain welcoming, accessible and attuned to the needs of all customers.

Sexual orientation



Gender identity

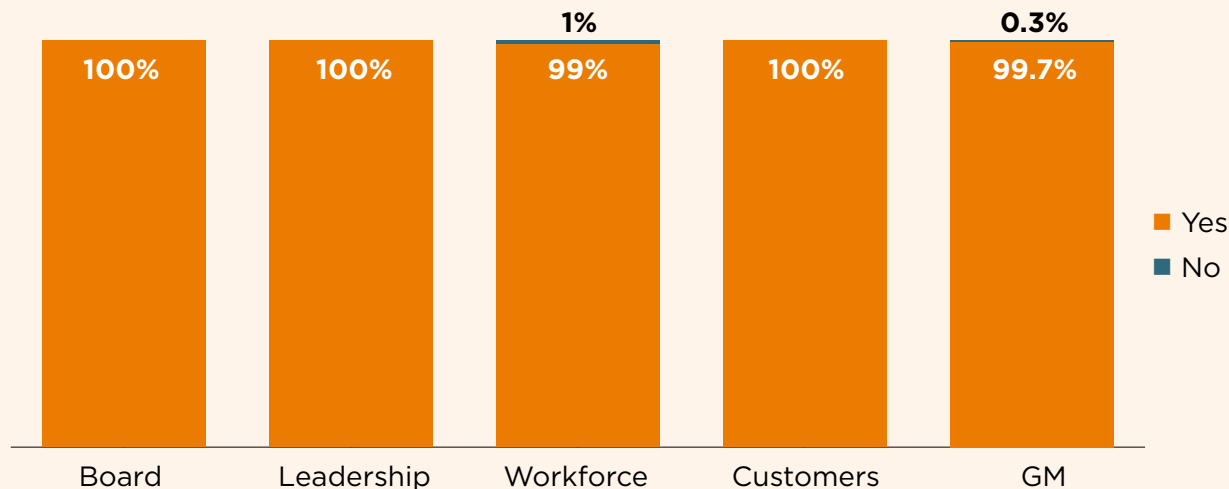
Gender identity data shows very limited representation at senior levels, with no Board or Leadership Team members recorded as having a gender different from their sex at birth. Within the workforce, around 1% of colleagues identify in this way—higher than the GM benchmark—but representation remains concentrated in non senior roles. This absence at senior levels may partly reflect low numbers overall within these cohorts as well as inconsistent data collection practices that limit the visibility of gender diverse colleagues.

Customer data shows almost no variation, potentially reflecting gaps in data collection rather than an absence of gender diverse customers. Many organisations have historically

lacked inclusive gender identity data collection forms or relied on systems designed only to capture binary sex categories, resulting in incomplete and inconsistent datasets for both colleagues and customers.

These limitations make it difficult to understand the true level of gender diversity across the sector and risk overlooking the needs and experiences of gender diverse people in service design, policy development and workforce planning. Strengthening data collection practices—through inclusive categories, clearer explanations and consistent recording—will be essential for building an accurate evidence base going forward.

Gender identity - Sex same as registered at birth



Change over Time

Understanding how diversity and representation have shifted over time is an important part of assessing progress across the sector.

Trend analysis enables us to look beyond year by year snapshots and identify whether interventions are having a sustained impact, whether disparities are widening or narrowing, and where further focus is required. This analysis draws on the datasets collected through previous DICE benchmarking exercises carried out in 2020 and 2022, allowing changes to be examined across multiple reporting points and providing a broader context for understanding how representation has evolved over the past few years.

Interpreting change across the DICE dataset requires care. Participation has varied between benchmarking years, and many organisations have been unable

to provide complete or comparable data across all periods, resulting in gaps that limit the strength of any conclusions. These challenges are amplified for Board and Leadership Team data, where cohort sizes are small; even a single appointment or departure can produce large percentage shifts, making year on year comparisons volatile and difficult to interpret with confidence. For this reason, Gender Identity has been excluded from the 2020–2025 comparison as data is not sufficiently robust to carry out meaningful analysis.

Despite these challenges, the available data offers valuable insights into broad patterns across the sector. These observations help build a clearer understanding of where progress is emerging and where representation remains uneven. The following summarises these trends while acknowledging the limitations of the dataset.



Patterns observed between 2020 and 2025

Across GM providers, the picture is one of overall progress but uneven distribution:

- » A few organisations act as consistent diversity leaders
- » A second tier shows incremental or late improvement
- » A third tier is characterised by volatile or declining representation – a pattern largely confined to Board and Leadership Teams, where small cohort sizes make the data less reliable, as even minor changes in membership can significantly distort the overall picture
- » A final group is invisible in trend analysis due to missing or inconsistent data.

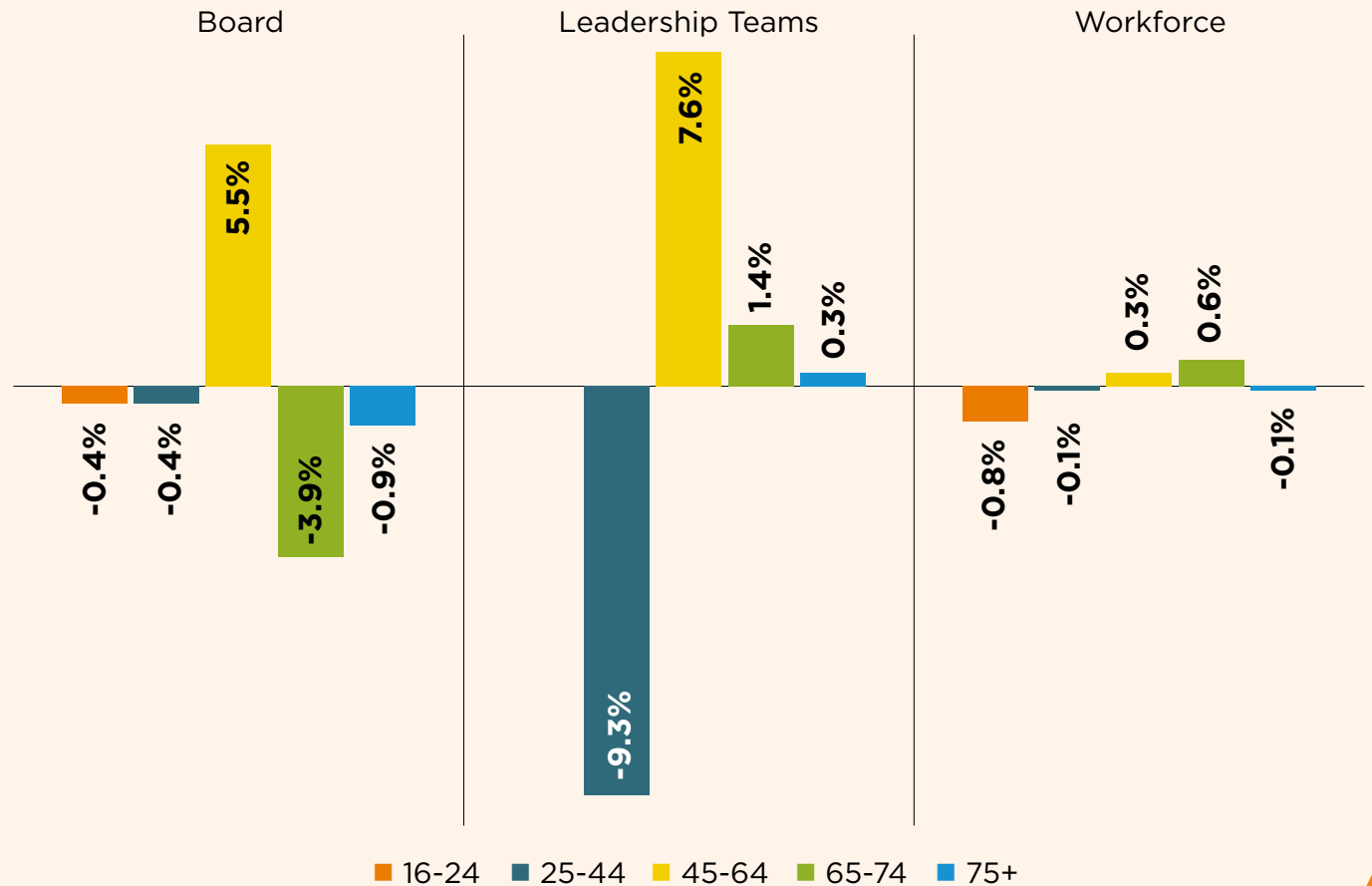
While the direction of travel appears broadly positive, the pace and consistency of change varies. Looking at each characteristic in more detail, the following patterns are observed for each key characteristic:

Age

The data shows a continued shift in age distribution between 2022 and 2025, with growth concentrated in the 45–64 age group across all organisational layers. At the same time, the proportion of younger colleagues

aged 16–24 has fallen within the workforce, potentially highlighting challenges in attracting and retaining early career talent. Movement among older age groups is more varied: representation of those aged 65–74 has increased within Leadership Teams and the workforce, while declining at Board level.

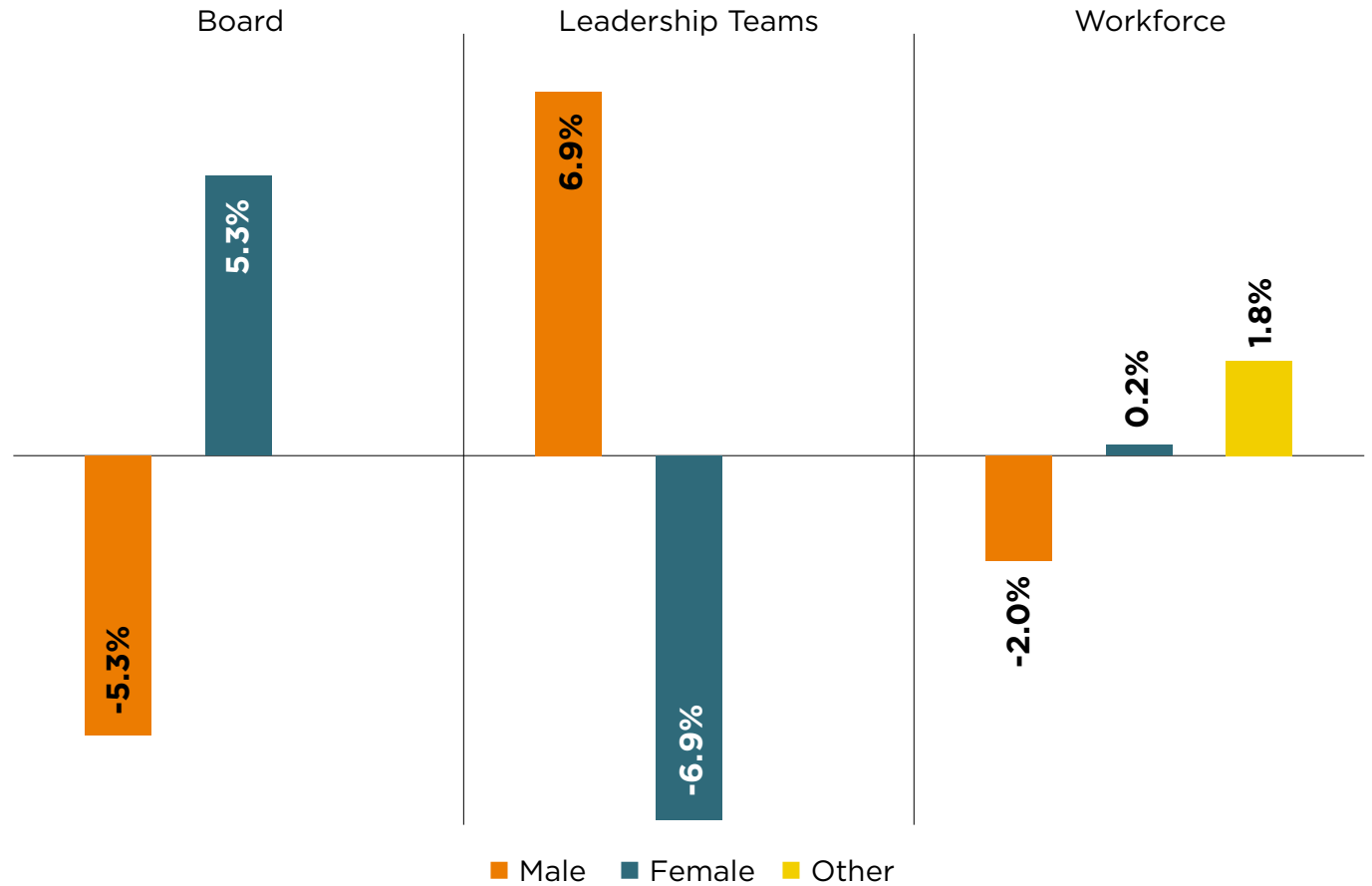
Age - % change between 2022 & 2025



Gender

The data indicates small shifts in gender representation between 2022 and 2025. At Board level, representation has moved toward greater gender balance, with an increase in female members mirrored by a corresponding decline in male representation. In contrast, Leadership Teams have shifted in the opposite direction, becoming more male dominated over the period however, this a movement that has resulted in greater gender parity when compared to the GM population as a whole. Workforce changes are modest, with a slight rise in female representation, a small reduction in male colleagues and a meaningful increase in those identifying outside the binary categories.

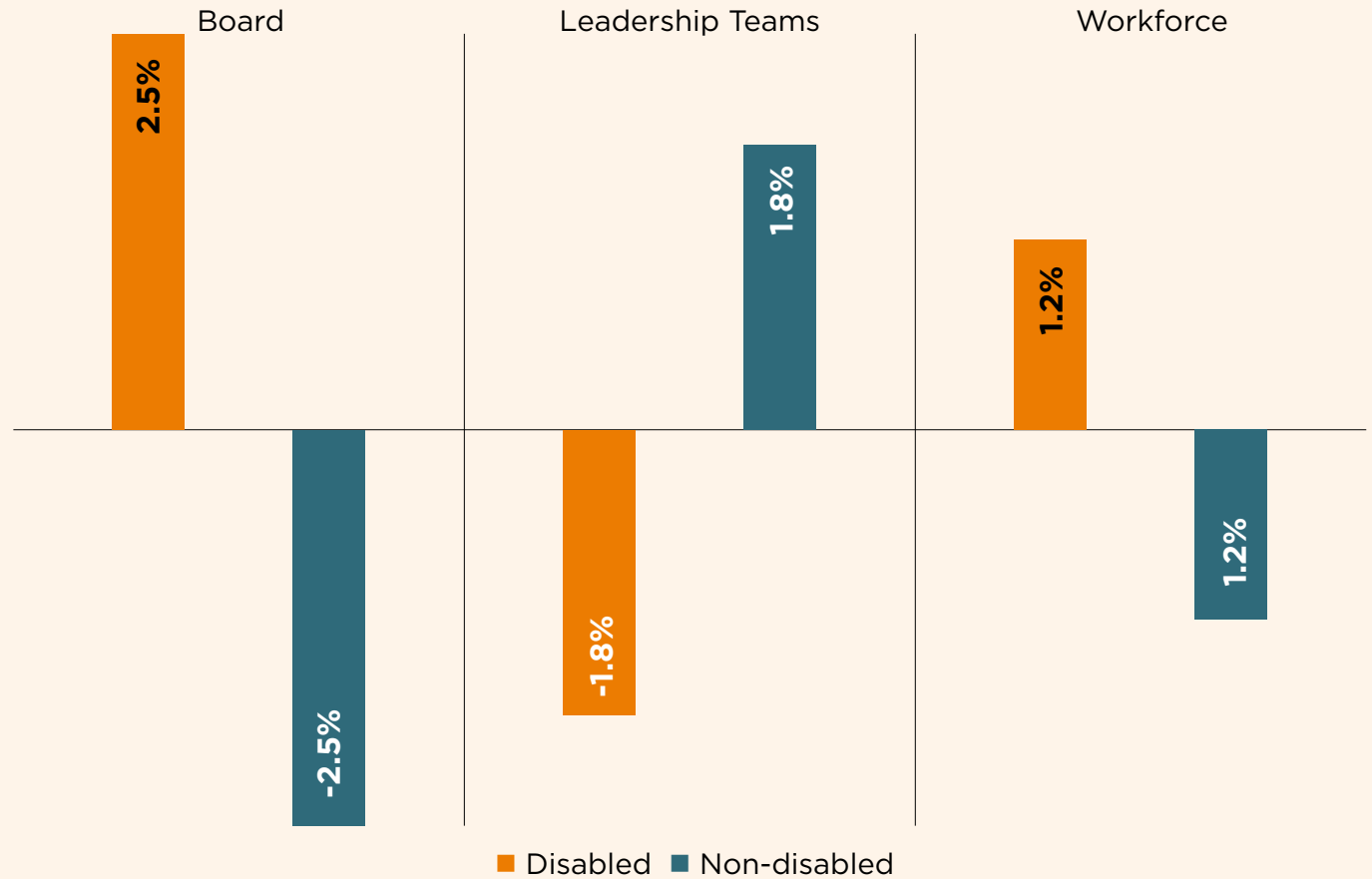
Gender - % change between 2022 & 2025



Disability

The data indicates differing patterns in disability representation between 2022 and 2025 across organisational levels. At Board level, the proportion of disabled members has increased, matched by an equivalent decrease in non disabled representation, suggesting a modest shift toward greater disabled representation. In contrast, Leadership Teams show the opposite pattern, with a reduction in disabled representation mirrored by a rise in non disabled colleagues. Within the workforce, disabled representation has increased slightly, while non disabled representation has fallen by a similar margin.

Disability - % change between 2022 & 2025



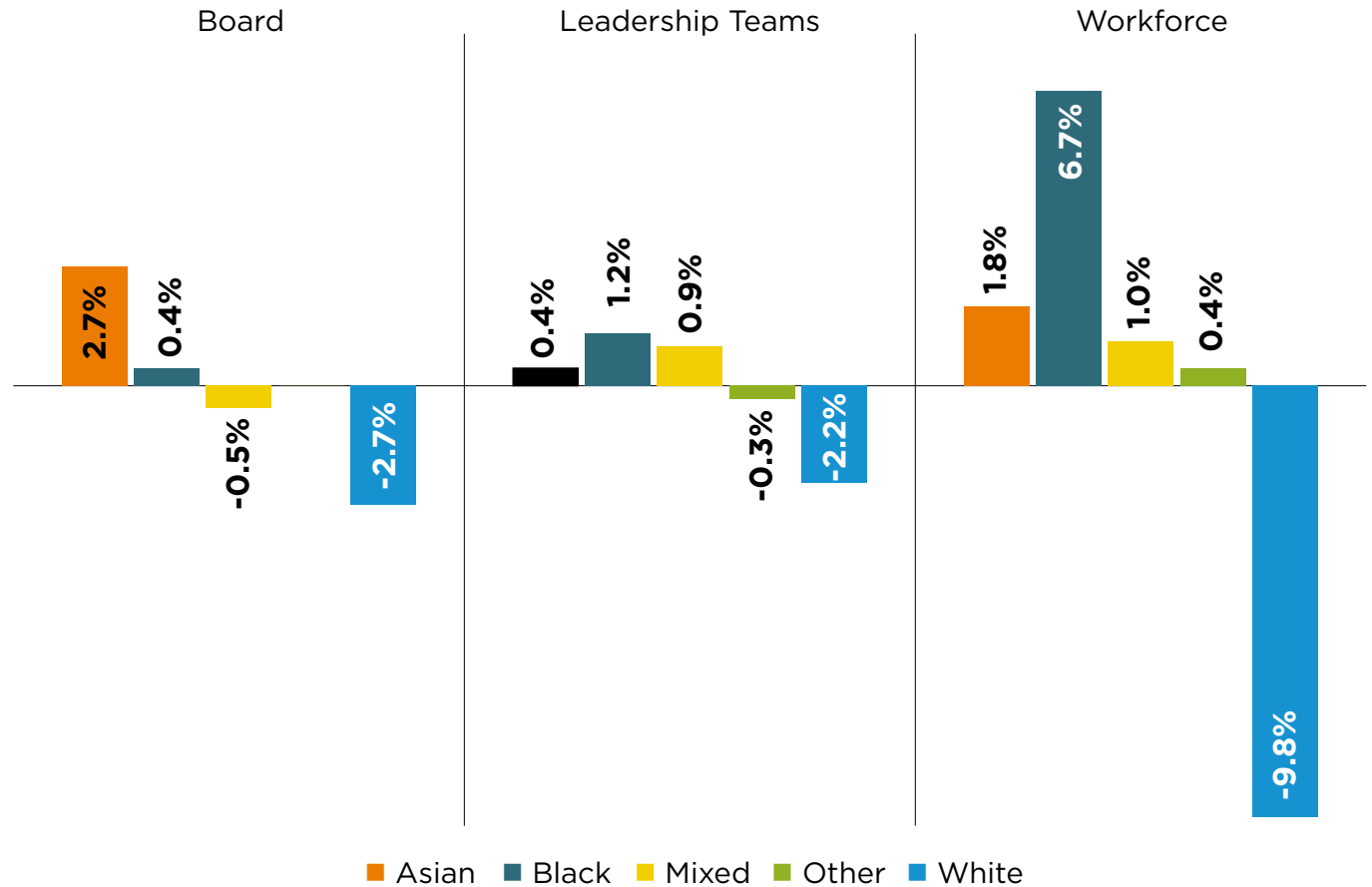
Ethnicity

The data shows modest but consistent diversification across most groups between 2022 and 2025.

Representation from Asian, Black and Mixed ethnic groups has generally increased, while White representation has declined across several cohorts. These shifts are most noticeable within the workforce, where increases across minority ethnic groups accompany a corresponding reduction in White representation.

Leadership Teams also show small gains in minority ethnic representation, though movement remains limited. At Board level, changes are more variable, but still reflect slight increases among some minority groups alongside a decrease in White representation. Overall, the pattern points to gradual progress toward a more ethnically diverse profile, with the most meaningful shifts occurring within the workforce.

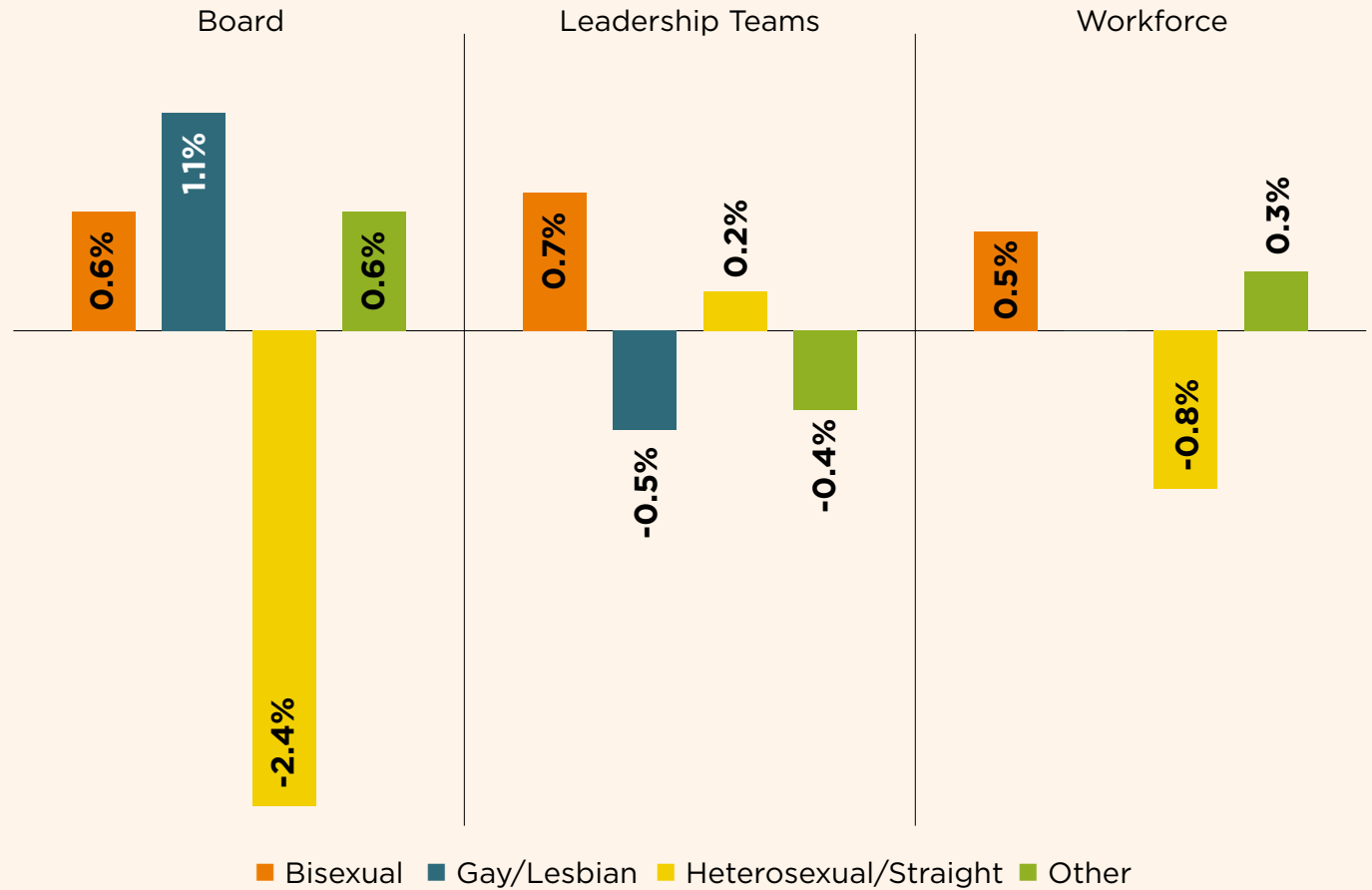
Broad ethnic group - % change between 2022 & 2025



Sexual Orientation

Between 2022 and 2025, changes in sexual orientation are modest but show a gradual broadening of diversity across some organisational layers. At Board level, the proportion of colleagues identifying as heterosexual has decreased, with an equivalent rise in those identifying as LGBTQ+. In contrast, Leadership Teams show a slight increase in heterosexual representation alongside a small reduction in LGBTQ+ colleagues. Within the Workforce LGBTQ+ representation has increased marginally, indicating steady but incremental diversification among employees overall.

Sexual orientation - % change between 2022 & 2025



Conclusion

The findings from this year's DICE benchmarking exercise present a picture of a sector that is diverse, committed and evolving, but one where meaningful challenges remain.

Across Greater Manchester housing providers, colleagues represent a rich mix of backgrounds and identities. Workforce level representation is broadly aligned with the wider GM population in several areas illustrating the strong foundations on which the sector continues to build.

However, the data also highlights clear and persistent disparities. Representation at senior levels continues to lag behind both the wider workforce and the customer base, particularly in relation to ethnicity, disability, age and gender identity. These gaps matter. They shape who is involved in strategic conversations, whose voices influence decision making, and how confidently organisations can demonstrate inclusive leadership. They also affect how well providers understand and respond to the lived experiences of the communities they serve -communities that are themselves more diverse, older and more

likely to be disabled than the workforce that serves them.

The report also underlines the ongoing limitations of equality data across the partnership. High levels of missing or “prefer not to say” responses, differences in category options, and inconsistent participation across benchmarking years all affect the accuracy of comparisons and reduce confidence in trend analysis. These issues are not unique to GMHP, but they remain a barrier to achieving sector wide clarity on progress. Improving the completeness and consistency of equality data will be essential for strengthening accountability and informing targeted action.

Despite these challenges, the direction of travel is positive. Organisations are demonstrating genuine commitment through targeted initiatives, transparent self assessment and the implementation of more inclusive policies and practices. Improvements are visible across several protected characteristics.

Looking ahead, the sector's priorities are clear: deepen representation at senior levels; strengthen data quality and harmonisation; create more inclusive recruitment, development and progression pathways; and continue embedding equity, diversity and inclusion at the heart of organisational culture and service delivery. Doing so will better align internal structures with the communities that

GMHP members serve and ensure that all colleagues - regardless of background - feel valued, supported and able to thrive.

While this report focuses on the six characteristics for which robust data is currently available, there is growing recognition across the sector that representation is shaped by many other forms of diversity. Socio economic background, in particular, plays a significant role in shaping access to employment, progression opportunities and lived experience, yet is rarely measured consistently. As the sector evolves, expanding the diversity data framework will be essential to understanding the full range of experiences within the workforce and ensuring that inclusion efforts remain relevant, responsive and evidence led.

Collectively, GMHP members have demonstrated willingness, determination and openness to learning. With sustained focus and a shared commitment to improvement, the sector is well positioned to build on the progress seen to date and move with confidence toward a more inclusive future for colleagues, customers and communities across Greater Manchester.

The case studies included in the following section highlight examples of innovation, collaboration and leadership that show change is not only possible, but already underway.

Case Studies

The following case studies highlight the wide range of equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives underway across Greater Manchester Housing Providers.

Each example demonstrates how organisations are putting inclusive principles into practice whether by strengthening colleague support, diversifying leadership pipelines, enhancing customer experience or building deeper community connections. Together, these stories illustrate the creativity, commitment and collaboration across the partnership, showing how local action is driving meaningful change for colleagues, customers and communities.



Re-examining colleague benefits through an EDI lens – Irwell Valley Homes

An overhaul of colleague benefits at Irwell Valley Homes is helping to ensure every colleague - regardless of background, identity or life stage - can access benefits that truly reflect and support their needs.

The package has been designed using colleague feedback and built around flexibility, fairness and personal choice.

One of the biggest changes was the introduction of the Bank Holiday Swap, giving colleagues the option to exchange UK bank holidays - traditionally centred on Christian events - for days that better align with their own religious, cultural or personal celebrations. For some colleagues, this marks a significant shift toward greater cultural inclusion and recognition of diverse identities.

Responding to cost of living pressures, Irwell Valley Homes also launched a Summer Savings Club, after parents shared that financial strain peaks just before the school holidays. Combined with the long standing festive savings scheme, the package now offers more equitable support for families throughout the year.

To tackle inequalities in access to healthcare - especially NHS waiting times - the organisation introduced new salary sacrifice schemes for private medical and dental care.

A revamped £150 wellbeing allowance, no longer limited to one platform, gives colleagues freedom to choose the support that benefits them most, from dental treatment to menopause support.

Further measures included expanded access to counsellors and coaches, including neurodiversity specialists, and the introduction of length of service awards. These celebrate contributions from year one through to 25 years, helping to build a culture where everyone feels valued.

In recruitment, a refreshed 'refer a friend' scheme broadens the candidate pool while rewarding both the referrer and the new recruit - in turn supporting efforts to diversify the workforce.

These innovations build on a suite of existing benefits colleagues said they value most, from enhanced parental pay and agile working to financial education.

Taken together, the new benefits are more than a set of perks. They are a comprehensive package which offers colleagues real choice, recognises diverse identities, and removes barriers to financial, physical and emotional wellbeing.



Strengthening inclusion through an EDI Pledge and Shadow Board initiative - Arawak Walton Housing Association

Arawak Walton is strengthening its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion through a Staff EDI Pledge and the development of a Shadow Board.

The EDI Pledge, signed by all colleagues, sets clear expectations for how the organisation works. It commits colleagues to treating everyone with dignity and respect, challenging discrimination, supporting a diverse workforce and delivering fair, inclusive services. It also promotes ongoing learning and reflection. The pledge has strengthened the shared understanding of inclusive behaviour and reinforces that every member of staff plays a role in creating an open, respectful workplace culture.

To improve representation in leadership, Arawak Walton is also creating a Shadow Board. This will be formed from talented ethnic minority applicants who expressed strong interest during our latest Board recruitment process but were not appointed. The programme will provide practical governance experience alongside mentoring and development to prepare members for future Board opportunities at Arawak Walton and across the housing sector.

Together, the EDI Pledge and Shadow Board support their aim to grow diverse talent, strengthen inclusion and ensure our leadership reflects the communities they serve.



Breaking down barriers through BOOST – GMHP

BOOST is a landmark programme driving equity and leadership transformation across GMHP. Developed in partnership with Innovate UK, Manchester Metropolitan University and Aston University, BOOST is designed to enable ethnically diverse colleagues to progress and thrive, while embedding long-term organisational and cultural change.

What makes BOOST unique is its dual focus on people and systems. Through disruptive mentoring, senior leaders work closely with ethnically diverse colleagues to unlock career pathways, open networks, and challenge organisational barriers. At the same time, BOOST cultivates a movement of allies across the sector, committed to reshaping behaviours and norms so that diversity can flourish at every level.

Structured around the GROW coaching model, the mentoring approach ensures mentees set ambitious but clear goals, explore pathways, and translate learning into

action. Mentors, in turn, grow as inclusive leaders – strengthening their confidence to challenge systemic inequalities and champion diverse talent.

Beyond individual impact, BOOST drives organisational change. Each GMHP member develops an internal change project informed by BOOST learning, ranging from succession planning and internal mentoring schemes to job-shadowing and development pathways. This ensures momentum is sustained and embedded within organisational structures, not limited to programme participation.

BOOST has also enabled GMHP to respond collectively to wider societal events affecting staff and communities. In addition, GMHP-wide leadership training in partnership with Inclusive Employers now equips managers to hold meaningful conversations about race and equity, supporting inclusive culture change across the region.

The BOOST community continues to grow, with Cohort 3 bringing together 20 mentees and 20 mentors from 19 organisations. The programme is strengthening the leadership pipeline, accelerating development, and building a culture where ethnically diverse leaders can thrive.

The impact of BOOST:

- » 66 colleagues completed mentoring to date (Cohorts 1 & 2)
- » 40 participants in 2026 (20 mentees / 20 mentors)
- » 19 GMHP organisations involved
- » 12 promotions achieved across Cohorts 1 & 2 to date
- » 7 promotions within six months from Cohort 1 (including 1 Director-level appointment)
- » 5 Cohort 2 promotions so far (3 internal, 2 external moves)
- » 5 mentees pursuing additional qualifications/board development opportunities



Setting care leavers up to succeed - First Choice Homes Oldham

First Choice Homes Oldham (FCHO) and Oldham Council recognised that young people leaving care often face additional challenges when moving into adulthood and can need extra support to manage a new tenancy and live independently.

That’s why they teamed up to develop a Leaving Care Pledge. Co-designed with local young people who have been in the care system, the pledge aims to provide a more supported pathway into adulthood, ensuring people feel safe, valued and supported to succeed.

The pledge commits both organisations to offering a suitable and secure home for every young person leaving care. This is supported by a new Tenancy Readiness Programme, which covers budgeting, managing bills, moving in, community safety, wellbeing, and knowing how to ask for help early. The programme aims to build confidence and reduce the risk of tenancy breakdown, arrears or crisis.

Additional help is also available, including moving-in packs, access to community hubs for advice, and regular check-ins from FCHO’s tenancy sustainment teams. The partnership is committed to using the voices and experiences of young people who have experienced care to shape future improvements and ensure the pledge continues to meet their needs.

“We know that those leaving care do need extra support. This pledge allows every young care leaver the chance for a positive and supported tenancy experience at a crucial time in their lives.”

Andy Ewart, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Corporate Services at FCHO.



Tailoring services through effective reasonable adjustments - ForHousing

ForHousing has embedded a strong, people first approach to equality, diversity and inclusion by ensuring that reasonable adjustments are at the heart of its service delivery. Through clear policies, improved data collection and a culture of empowerment, the organisation ensures that tenants receive the support they need to live safely and comfortably.

A key element of this approach is its commitment to gathering and maintaining accurate, up to date information about tenants and their households. This insight enables teams to tailor services effectively, from communication preferences to adaptations in the home. Building on this learning, ForHousing launched a new statement of intent on reasonable adjustments, giving colleagues, contractors and tenants a shared understanding of expectations and reinforcing a consistent, inclusive framework for decision making.

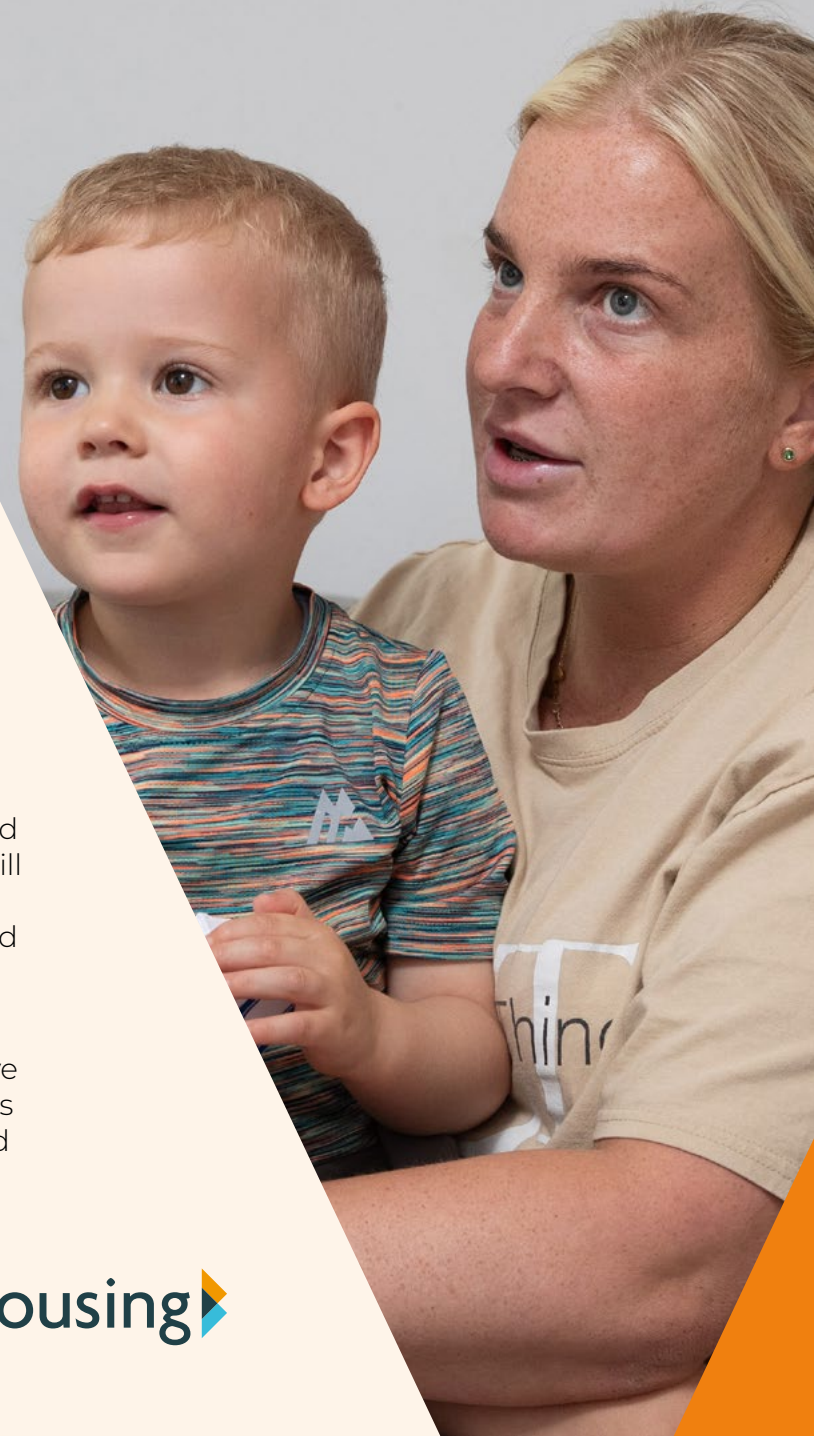
The organisation's Getting to Know You campaign has significantly strengthened the quality of tenant data, helping teams adapt communications and support to individual needs. Accessible communication is a major focus, with services including British Sign Language video interpreting, translation support, and letters in Braille, large print and

easy read formats, all guided by a detailed colleague toolkit.

To embed its culture of inclusive practice, ForHousing partnered with drama based training company Afta Thought to deliver bespoke training using live scenarios. These sessions highlighted the importance of empathetic listening and adapting approaches for tenants with diverse physical, mental health and cultural needs. Recorded scenarios are now part of the organisation's e learning for ongoing development.

ForHousing extends this commitment to contractors and suppliers, who receive tailored training to help identify when adjustments will benefit tenants. All reasonable adjustments are now recorded for continuous learning, and the Adaptations Service is being refined to better meet diverse needs.

Through consistent processes, comprehensive training and a strong EDI ethos, ForHousing is creating inclusive homes and services shaped around the individual needs of its tenants.



Time to Talk: Allyship – Jigsaw Homes Group

Jigsaw Homes runs quarterly Time to Talk sessions to help promote a better understanding of diversity and inclusion amongst colleagues.

These sessions are open to all colleagues and take place online, inviting a guest speaker to share their lived experience of a particular awareness topic or important information around an EDI initiative.

In the past, this has included sessions on intersectionality, ADHD awareness, mental health, show racism the red card and menopause awareness.

One session on allyship welcomed guest speaker Garry Clarke-Strange of Think Inclusion and gave colleagues the tools to create inclusive environments for those who are underrepresented. This included the importance of using their privilege to advocate for others and providing people from marginalised groups with opportunities for growth and advancement.

It also explored ways to challenge and address biases or discrimination in the workplace and focused on the benefits being an ally can bring - from increased innovation and problem solving to happier colleagues with a better self-esteem and positive impact on recruitment and employee retention.

Through the Time to Talk sessions, Jigsaw Homes continues to foster an open and supportive culture by ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion remain at the heart of its organisational values.



Music in Mind: Connecting through song – MSV Housing in partnership with Manchester Camerata

What began as a ten-week creative project at Khubsuret House, an MSV independent living scheme, became a year-long celebration of connection, confidence, and joy. Music in Mind, delivered by Manchester Camerata, used music-making and singing to support residents' wellbeing and reduce isolation.

Led by the scheme manager Salma, the sessions quickly became the highlight of the week. Residents of all backgrounds joined in; sharing songs, memories, and laughter. The impact went far beyond music – in growing confidence and forming stronger friendships, many residents reported feeling happier and more connected to each other and their community.

Following the success of the sessions, the group was invited to perform at Manchester's Bridgewater Hall, an unforgettable moment that celebrated diversity, inclusion, and the power of community creativity. Watch their performance here.

Salma said:

“The transformation has been incredible. Residents who were once shy or withdrawn are now leading songs, dancing, and supporting each other. The project brought the whole scheme to life.”

The partnership demonstrates how creative collaboration can support inclusion, break down social barriers, and improve wellbeing, especially among older and diverse communities. What started as a short-term initiative has now become an ongoing part of life at Khubsuret House, leaving a lasting legacy of empowerment and pride.



Committed to supporting neurodiverse colleagues – Onward Homes

Onward is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion in everything we do. Supporting neurodiverse colleagues is a key part of that commitment.

Embedding a culture of continuous learning and empathy

Neurodiversity Awareness Sessions have proven to be impactful, with feedback highlighting increased understanding, empathy, and behavioural reflection. To maintain momentum, Onward will continue offering regular, expert-led sessions that explore a broader range of neurodiverse conditions and lived experiences. These sessions will be integrated into onboarding processes and ongoing professional development, ensuring that all employees are equipped to support their colleagues effectively.

Creating safe spaces and open dialogue

Psychological safety is a cornerstone of wellbeing. Sustaining success means continuing to provide non-judgmental spaces where colleagues feel comfortable sharing their experiences. Onward does this through our Colleague Forums and through our intranet, where those colleagues who have attended the Neurodiversity Workshops have shared positive feedback for others to see. Encouraging openness not only supports neurodiverse individuals but also strengthens team cohesion and trust.

Data-driven decision making

Colleague surveys have already played a role in shaping initiatives. To sustain success, Onward will continue to gather and analyse feedback, using it to inform strategy and measure impact.

Leadership commitment and role modelling

Leadership plays a vital role in embedding wellbeing into organisational culture. Managers are trained not only to recognise neurodiverse traits but also to lead with empathy and flexibility. By modelling inclusive behaviours and actively participating in wellbeing initiatives, leaders reinforce the message that health and wellbeing are strategic priorities.

Expanding the scope of wellbeing

While neurodiversity is a critical focus, sustaining success means broadening the scope to encompass other aspects of wellbeing - mental, physical, emotional, and social. Initiatives already in place include mental health first aid training, flexible working policies, wellness challenges, and access to counselling services. A holistic approach ensures that all colleagues feel supported, regardless of their individual needs.

What success looks like

Success means seeing increased uptake of wellbeing resources, improved retention among neurodiverse colleagues, and more colleagues sharing their lived experiences. Colleagues feel seen, heard, and valued, with access to tailored support that enables them to thrive. The workplace is known for its inclusivity, attracting diverse talent and fostering a culture where everyone can bring their whole selves to work.

Ultimately, sustaining success means staying curious, compassionate, and committed to continuous improvement.

Feedback from recent Neurodiversity Workshops

“I learned so much and gained a great understanding and now feel so much more confident in my ability to support my team member and others going forward”

“The opportunity to discuss personal experiences and the support shown by everyone in the room made the session feel open and free from judgement.”



Onward

Promoting LGBTQ+ inclusion - Rochdale Boroughwide Housing

THE LGBTQ+ Housing Pledge resonated with Rochdale Borough Wide's core values of community, inclusion, and belonging. It provides a clear framework to demonstrate their ongoing commitment to ensuring LGBTQ+ people can thrive - both as residents and as colleagues working in social housing.

In working towards the pledge, RBH began working collaboratively with our LGBTQ+ colleague group and Community Diversity Advocates to assess current practices and identify areas for improvement. Community Diversity Advocates are customers who belong to at least one legally protected characteristic group and provide valuable insights based on their lived experiences. These conversations, rooted in openness and lived experience, became the foundation of meaningful change.

As a result of this collaborative effort, RBH proudly achieved Pioneer Status under the LGBTQ+ Housing Pledge. Pledge Pioneer status confirms that RBH have met the requirements of the pledge, creating a framework for LGBTQ+ residents to have a voice at the highest level of the organisation, as well as increasing the visibility of LGBTQ+ customers and colleagues, and providing training for colleagues.

The judging panel praised RBH's community diversity advocates initiative and considered it a strong example of engaging with residents.

They also welcomed RBH's track record of demonstrating visibility, especially at Rochdale Pride and Manchester Pride events, and that the pledge was incorporated into RBH's strategy on diversity, inclusion, and belonging.

Achieving Pioneer status was more than symbolic - it represented a real shift in how RBH listens, learns, and acts to support the LGBTQ+ community.

Building on the momentum of our Pioneer Status, RBH now hosts regular community gatherings for LGBTQ+ residents across Rochdale. These events provide a safe space for connection and conversation, helping to strengthen community cohesion and reduce isolation.

By embracing the pledge, RBH has deepened its commitment to Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, ensuring that every person feels seen, valued, and supported.



'Race Equality Matters' trailblazer – The Riverside Group

Riverside is a proud member of Race Equality Matters, whose mission is to remove barriers and provide solutions to tackle race inequality. It shares solutions and best practice, proactively working with collaborating organisations and networks to implement effective change solutions.

Its Trailblazer series spotlights forward-thinking organisations that are implementing impactful solutions to drive race equality. Organisations apply to be Trailblazers, with applications being assessed by an independent judging panel. If successful, they are awarded a Trailblazer medal.

Riverside was awarded Silver Trailblazer status in recognition of its work improving race inequalities in its workforce, through a variety of measures including:

- » An ethnically diverse guaranteed interview scheme, an initiative for job applicants to help address under representation within senior level roles. A guaranteed interview

is given to ethnically diverse applicants applying for roles of £45,000 and above. It aims to ensure applicants who may previously have experienced barriers when applying for a senior role, make it to interview stage, provided they meet the essential minimum criteria.

- » A 'Skills Boost' programme, developed in collaboration with members of EMpower, Riverside's ethnically diverse colleague network. This in-person programme focuses on development in recruitment and interviews and includes developing personal brand and managing 'imposter syndrome'.
- » Continued participation in the Greater Manchester Housing Providers' BOOST programme and Graduate Entry Management Scheme (GEM), which have all been shaped by the experiences of our ethnically diverse colleagues.

Since their award, Riverside has gone on to create a Trainee Board Programme in partnership with the Housing Diversity

Network, with two of the three opportunities ringfenced for ethnically diverse talent.

Riverside has also introduced three trainee Board positions who are all ethnically diverse people.

Directors from across the group have shared personal stories about their perspectives as ethnically diverse colleagues in Riverside. Leaders also took part in the Race Equality Week 5-day challenge #ListenActChange, promoting the importance of ethnic diversity and further supporting colleagues.

Visibility at this level has made our ethnically diverse colleagues feel valued and comfortable, empowering them to proudly share their own stories about their cultural backgrounds during celebratory events such as Ramadan, South Asian Heritage Month, Diwali and Black History Month.

As a result of this work, Riverside has been asked to collaborate with Race Equality Matters to help develop its Gold Trailblazer Award and is eagerly looking forward to this partnership.



A conscious approach to inclusion - Southway Housing Trust

Southway Housing Trust's Conscious Inclusion initiative is not just about policies - it's about creating a culture where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to share their stories and bring them to life in every team meeting.

A key driver of engagement has been the human element at the heart of Southway's awareness days. These events have transformed the workplace atmosphere, making colleagues feel more connected and understood.

National Inclusion Week saw colleagues leading celebrations of Pakistani, Chinese, Irish, Jamaican, and Nigerian cultures. Personal stories, traditional attire, and presentations brought these cultures to life,

fostering understanding and appreciation. Black History Month was marked by conversations, shared meals, and the addition of new books to the Culture Corner, all recommended by Colleagues.

Colleagues also shared their own heritage stories, deepening the collective appreciation of Black history.

Southway has also hosted inspiring guest speakers, such as Samuel Kasumu and Reverend Jide Mccauley, who addressed topics like intersectionality, faith, and the power of being an outsider. These sessions encouraged open dialogue and reflection.

Mental health and wellbeing are also central to Southway's EDI strategy. Initiatives like "Take 10 to Read" encouraged staff to take

mindful breaks, while colleagues bravely shared personal experiences around menopause, ADHD, and suicide prevention. These stories, shared via the Hive intranet, created safe spaces for support and understanding.

They also launched their "Five Ways to Wellbeing" alongside - a refreshed and proactive approach to help every colleague feel valued, resilient, and empowered. This initiative is part of our commitment to creating a workplace where wellbeing is woven into everything we do.

Through Conscious Inclusion and our Five Ways to Wellbeing, Southway is building a workplace where diversity is celebrated, personal stories are valued, and everyone can thrive. This ongoing commitment ensures EDI is not just a statement, but a lived reality for all.



Driving inclusion through collaboration – Wythenshawe Community Housing Group (WCHG) and One Manchester

Greater Manchester Housing Providers (GMHP) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) leads group worked together to deliver its first joint awareness day for Disability Pride Month, showcasing collaborative working across the housing sector. The initiative aimed to raise awareness of disability and share practical knowledge to support colleagues and customers.

The centrepiece of the day was a webinar that brought together colleagues from One Manchester and Wythenshawe Community Housing Group (WCHG). They shared powerful lived experiences of disability, alongside professional insights into the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) process. The session concluded with an

interactive Q&A, creating a safe space for colleagues to ask questions and deepen their understanding.

To ensure the learning extended beyond the event, the EDI leads group developed a suite of resources, including a Resources Booklet, a Guide to Diagnosis, and a Myth-Busting Guide. These materials were designed to challenge misconceptions and provide practical support for colleagues across organisations.

Participants valued the opportunity to learn from real experiences and gain practical knowledge that could inform their work. The initiative also highlighted important lessons. Working together amplifies impact and

enables richer storytelling, but collaboration takes time. Different organisational pressures and ways of working can slow progress, yet the long-term benefits - stronger relationships, shared resources, and continuous learning - make it worthwhile. This approach ensures that organisations without a dedicated EDI lead can access valuable knowledge and tools.

Looking ahead, the GMHP EDI leads group is committed to building on this success. By continuing to share expertise and resources, we can create a more inclusive housing sector where every colleague has the opportunity to learn and contribute to positive change.



Peer navigators project – Bolton At Home

Bolton at Home's community led employment programme puts local people at the heart of neighbourhood change. In partnership with Bolton Community and Voluntary Services (Bolton CVS), the organisation recruits tenants and residents into paid 18 month part time roles as Peer Navigators - local connectors who use their lived experience to support neighbours, tackle inequalities in employments and strengthen trust in services.

The Peer Navigator model is designed around one central idea: people with lived experience understand their communities best. From the moment the programme launched, residents stepped forward to take on roles focused on the issues that matter most locally - community cohesion, social isolation, men's mental health and outdoor spaces

Their day to day work includes knocking on doors, listening to residents, signposting people to support, and helping design activities that make communities feel connected again. The result is a growing network of trusted local champions who are reducing isolation, improving wellbeing and ensuring that services feel relevant and culturally responsive.

The programme is improving long term outcomes for individuals and neighbourhoods while creating paid employment for people who may have otherwise faced barriers to work. Bolton at Home sees it as a model for how lived experience can drive inclusive, community led solutions - and how housing providers can help tackle health and social inequalities from within the community itself.



Bolton
at **Home**

Partnership working provides new opportunities – Great Places

Great Places partnered with Pure Innovations, an organisation who works with disabled people primarily those with mental health challenges, to offer new employment opportunities to local people.

Every year the housing provider needs additional resources in their Grounds Maintenance teams as the grass and shrubbery grows over the summer.

Instead of covering with agency staff, they approached Pure Innovations to offer a six month paid work experience placement for two of the people they work with.

The trainees received full training and certifications on all the equipment and worked brilliantly with over the summer season – leaving with qualifications, a work history, a great reference and bags of confidence.



greatplaces
HOUSING GROUP

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PURE
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Racial Inequalities in Housing and Homeless: A joint project between GMHCA, GMHP and the GM Race Equality Panel

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), the Greater Manchester Housing Providers (GMHP), and the GM Race Equality Panel have jointly commissioned a landmark research project to understand and address racial inequalities in housing and homelessness across the city region.

This collaborative initiative responds to long recognised disparities in outcomes experienced by Black and minoritised ethnic communities, a concern highlighted in recent strategic reviews and public inquiries.

The project, which began early 2025, brings together qualitative and quantitative research to build the clearest picture yet of how racial inequalities shape people's experiences when accessing social housing, sustaining tenancies, and navigating homelessness services.

The partnered research will include focus groups, interviews, community outreach and peer research, complemented by GMCA and GMHP led quantitative analysis to ensure a cohesive programme of insight.

The project seeks to uncover the extent to which racial inequalities result in poorer outcomes, the influence of racist practice within services, and the ways race combines with other structural factors, such as poverty or employment patterns, to deepen disadvantage.

Areas of exploration include access to social housing, tenancy sustainment, homelessness support, the quality of social housing, and the ability of tenants to have a meaningful voice.

This work builds on several significant developments. GMHP, for example, has strengthened its Diversity, Inclusion, Community Cohesion and Equalities (DICE) workstream since 2020, aiming to deepen understanding of inequalities linked to race and nationality across the housing sector. Meanwhile, the findings of the Independent Inequalities Commission and the inquest into the death of Awaab Ishak have sharpened the region's focus on racial inequality and the need for decisive action. The emerging Race Equality Strategy for Greater Manchester further reinforces the need for clear leadership, accountability and measurable performance.

The initial phase of the project, centred on qualitative analysis, will report its findings in early 2026.



Strengthening Representation Through the 20% Movement: GMHP

Greater Manchester Housing Providers (GMHP) have launched an ambitious sector wide commitment to widen representation by increasing the number of colleagues with lived experience of social housing. Through the 20% Movement, GMHP members have pledged that by 2034, 20% of their workforce will be made up of people from social rented households.

This pledge reflects a shared belief that bringing more lived experience into the sector will strengthen services, deepen insight and help organisations stay connected to the communities they serve.

The initiative was developed collectively by the chief executives of all 26 GMHP organisations. Inspired in part by Roman Krznaric's book *The Good Ancestor*, which calls for long term thinking and decisions that benefit future generations, the leaders agreed that increasing socio economic diversity within their workforces is essential for building a fairer, more representative housing sector.

Current estimates suggest that most landlords who measure socio economic background report that only 7-8% of their workforce live in social housing, highlighting the scale of the challenge. The pledge therefore marks a deliberate shift away from

historic assumptions about employing tenants - assumptions that previously framed such recruitment as risky or inappropriate.

The Movement also aligns with the recommendations of the Better Social Housing Review, which encourages housing providers to attract candidates from within their communities to strengthen trust, improve representation and deliver more responsive services.

The 20% Movement represents a significant step toward reshaping the sector's approach to talent, inclusion and community connection. By intentionally broadening the socio economic diversity of their workforces, GMHP members are working to ensure that colleagues, customers and communities are more closely aligned - and that lived experience becomes a valued source of insight and leadership across the region.



Driving Inclusive Change Together: The Work of the GMHP EDI Leads Group

The Greater Manchester Housing Providers (GMHP) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Leads group is a collaborative network that brings together EDI professionals from across the region to strengthen practice, increase consistency and improve outcomes for both colleagues and customers. By working collectively, the group ensures that organisations benefit from shared learning, coordinated approaches and support that would be difficult to achieve individually.

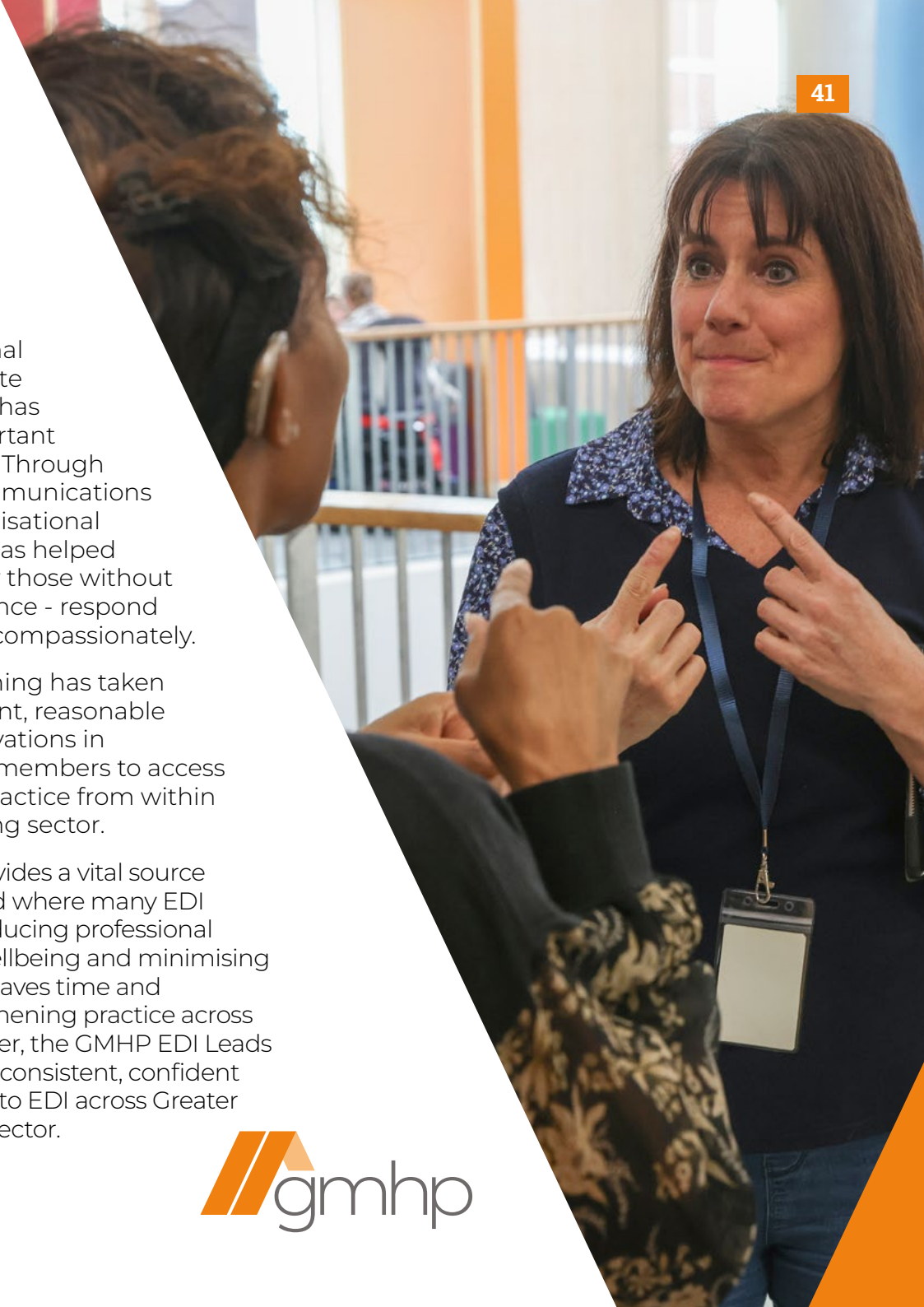
A key achievement has been the development of shared Guiding Principles for Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs). These have enabled organisations without established processes to embed EIAs more effectively and improve the quality of decision making. Colleagues across the partnership report increased confidence, supported by clearer tools, practical examples and the reassurance that they are applying a consistent, sector wide approach.

The group has also strengthened customer EDI data practices. By openly sharing methods, challenges and insights, members have improved how they collect, store and use EDI data, leading to better accuracy, more robust insight and closer alignment with regulatory expectations. This collaborative work has helped several organisations improve the accuracy and consistency of their data.

Supporting colleagues during global or national events that might create distress or uncertainty has become another important area of collective work. Through shared templates, communications and examples of organisational responses, the group has helped members - particularly those without existing internal guidance - respond more confidently and compassionately.

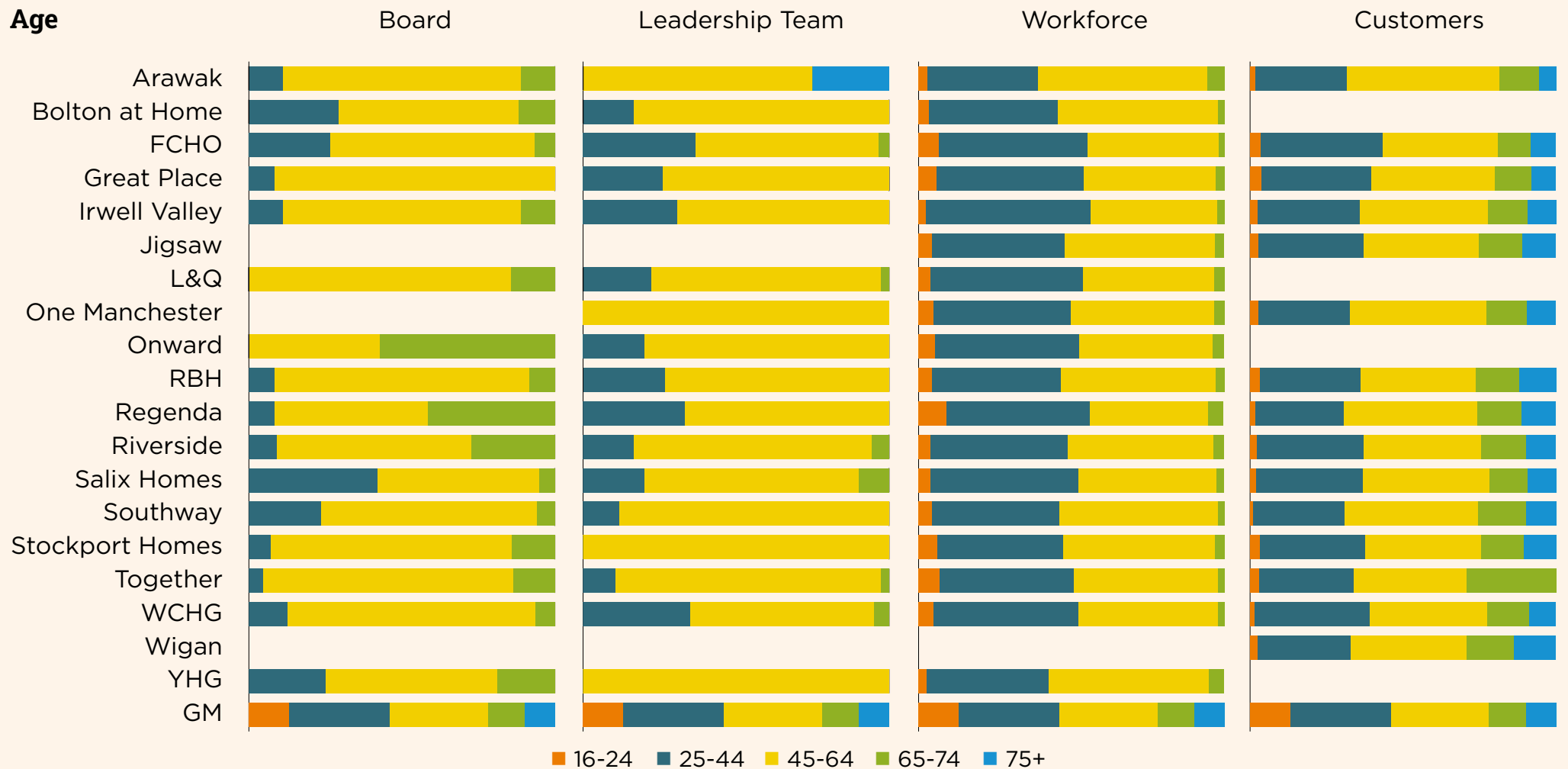
Additional shared learning has taken place across recruitment, reasonable adjustments and innovations in adaptations, enabling members to access a wide range of best practice from within and beyond the housing sector.

Crucially, the group provides a vital source of peer support in a field where many EDI leads work alone. By reducing professional isolation, supporting wellbeing and minimising duplication, the group saves time and resources while strengthening practice across the partnership. Together, the GMHP EDI Leads group is driving a more consistent, confident and inclusive approach to EDI across Greater Manchester's housing sector.

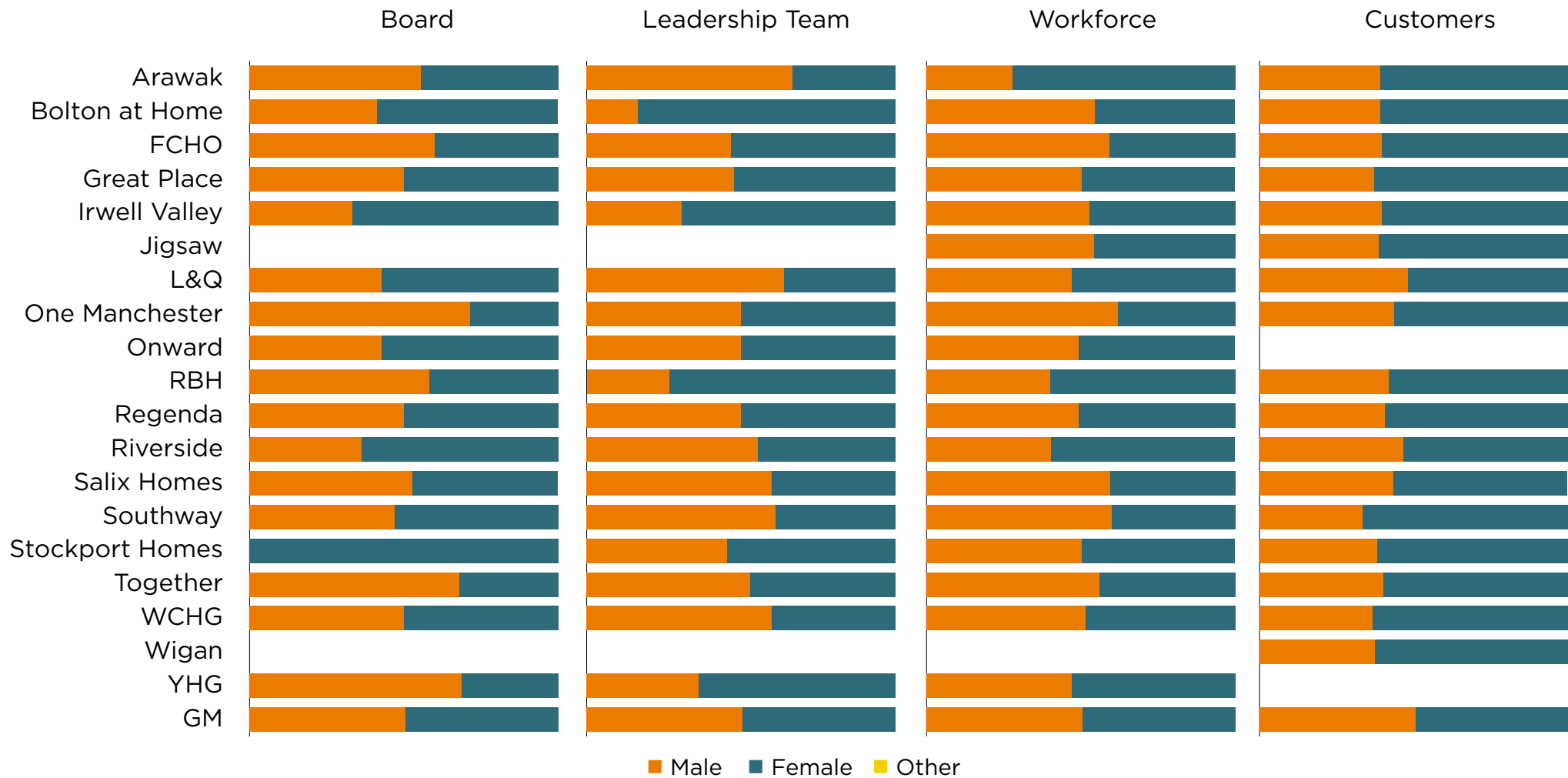


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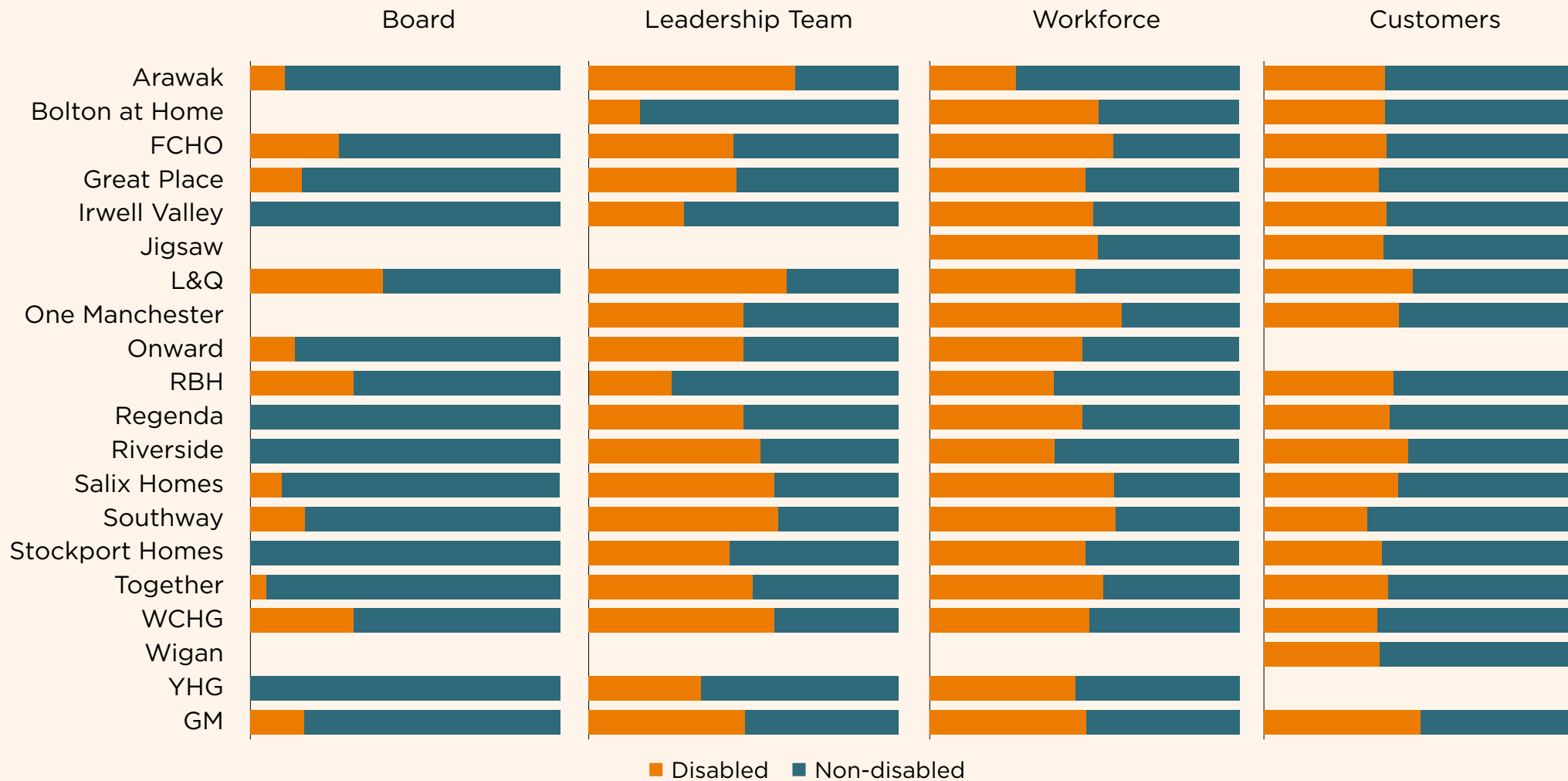
Diversity Profiles by Organisation and Characteristic



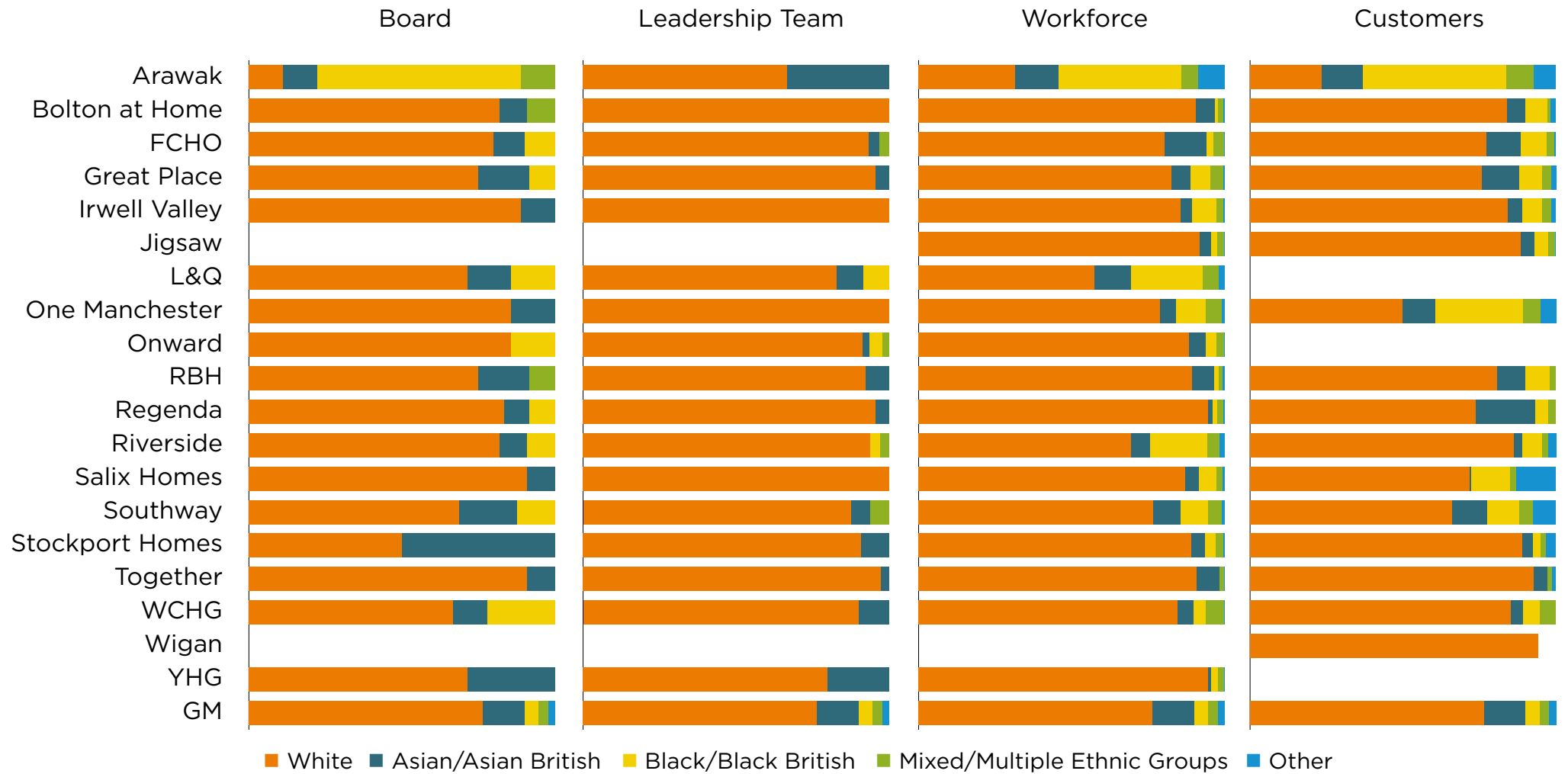
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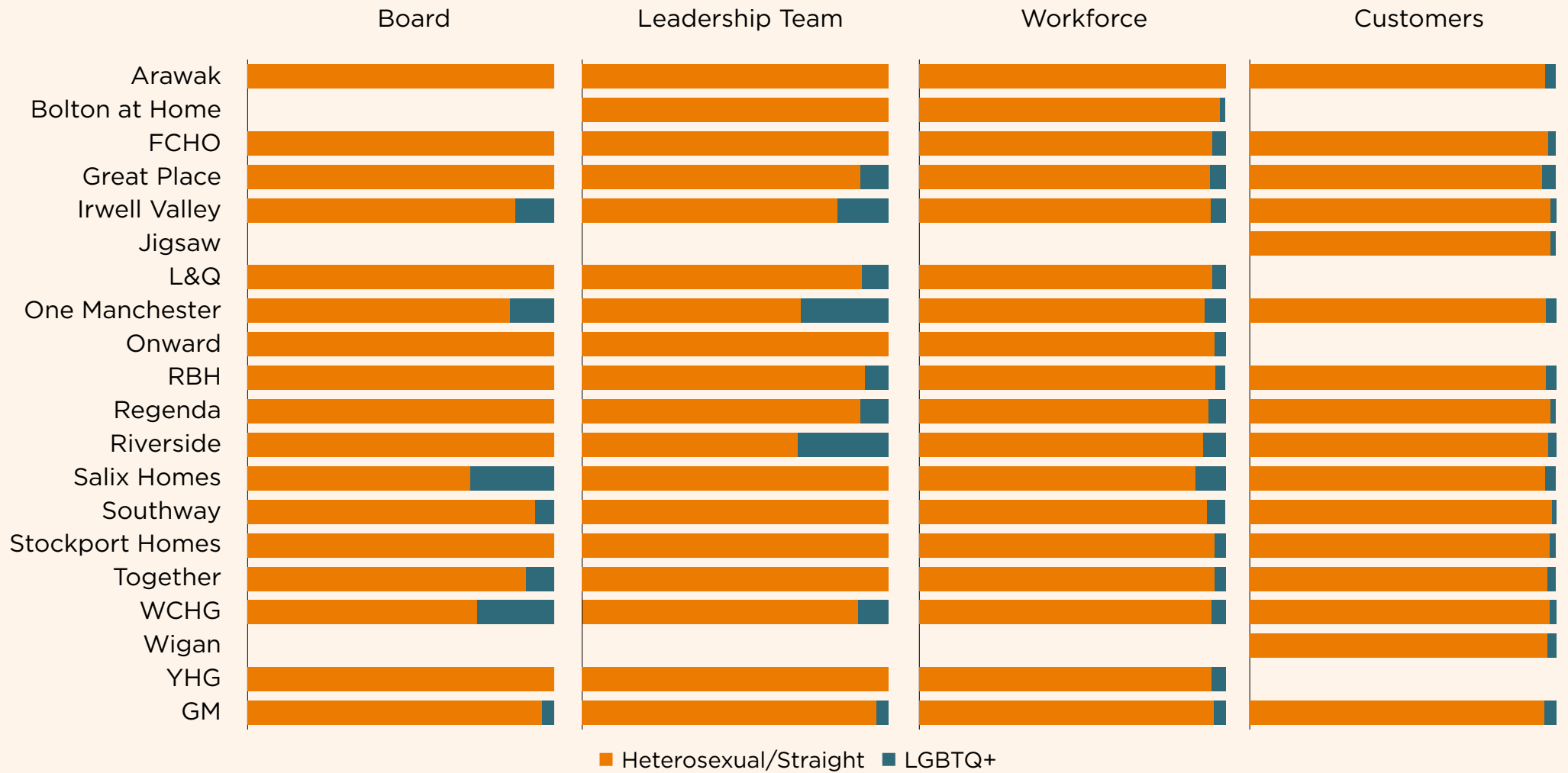
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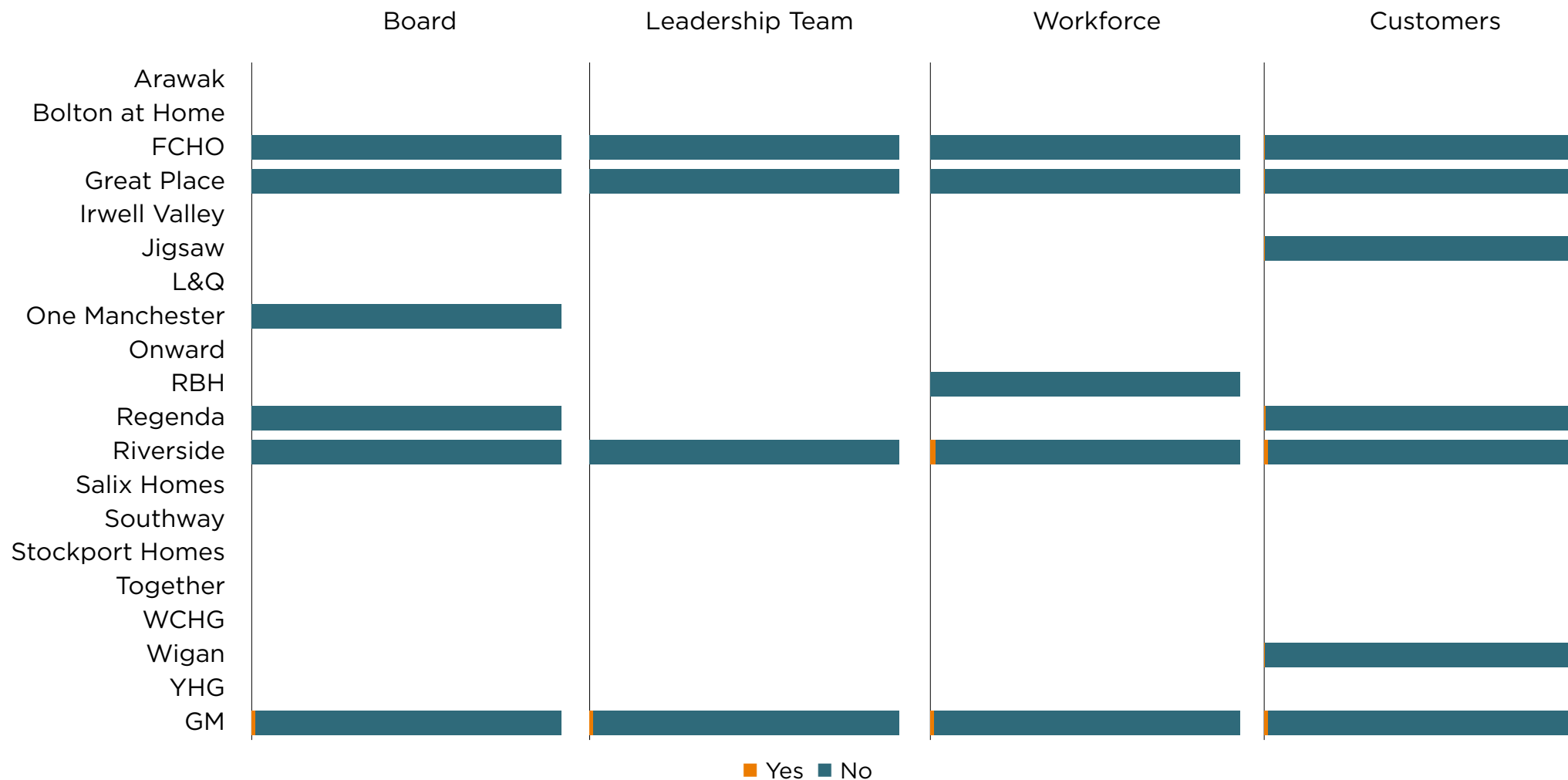
Ethnic Group



Sexual Orientation



Identifies as Transgender



This report has been made possible through the contributions, insight and commitment of colleagues across the Greater Manchester Housing Providers partnership.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to everyone who supported the development of this year's DICE benchmarking analysis.

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- » Sarah Walker, Irwell Valley Homes
- » Sonja Wellings, Irwell Valley Homes

Their leadership, coordination and analytical input have been invaluable in shaping the findings and strengthening the sector's shared understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion across Greater Manchester.

We also acknowledge the many colleagues across participating organisations who collected and submitted data, provided challenge and feedback, and continue to champion inclusive practice within their organisations.



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