

South West England EDI data

Results from NHF data collection

January 2022

Summary

In total, 12 housing associations with headquarters based in South West England responded to our data request, representing 76% of all stock owned by members with headquarters in this region.

This summary should be led alongside the South West England data published in the completed NHF equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) data tool and the report on national data.

About the data

We made every effort to ensure that each organisation's EDI data is comparable; however, there are some points to note in terms of the data and analysis presented:

- We did not ask organisations to submit their data as at a certain date. This means that the data represents different time points for different organisations. It is also highly likely that it is already out of date, given turnover in staff.
- Where there are data gaps, some of these (particularly marital and civil partnership status) are due to categories in the tool not matching categories in information collected by housing associations.
- For some organisations, social housing is one part of a larger business, which might include (non-residential) support and care or non-social housing. Where possible, organisations separated staff responsible for housing from wider employee data.
- No customer data is included – there were too many gaps within customer data, and the focus was on the housing association workforce, so we have not looked at this.
- We cannot conclude anything on intersectionality as the data is only available by individual characteristic. This means we cannot combine characteristics to look at intersectionality. Executives, for example, may have other protected

characteristics which make them more diverse than appears from individual characteristics such as sex or ethnicity.

Main findings

- Age and sex are the most accurate across workforce, executive and board as these have the fewest data gaps. Ethnicity data also has few gaps, with only 9% of workforce ethnicity unknown (either don't know or prefer not to say).
- As with national data, board data has the biggest gaps.
- Largest gaps in knowledge are around caring responsibilities (both children and informal care) and socio-economic background (all three characteristics – parent occupation at 14, attendance of independent school, and free school meal eligibility).
- While there are big gaps in gender identity (don't know for 60% of the workforce) and sexual orientation (don't know for 35%). Religion data is unknown for over a quarter (27%) of the workforce. There are bigger gaps in relation to sexual orientation data than in other regions, though fewer when it comes to marital or civil partnership status (don't know for 19% of workforce).
- Highest proportion of workforce who would prefer not to say by category – religion (7.8%), sexual orientation (4.9%) and marital or civil partnership status (4%).

When it comes to representation:

- There is a more even split of sexes in the workforce than nationally – 52% are female compared to 51% of the population by stock location. Executives and board members are more evenly split and representative of the population, though we don't know sex for 30% of board members.
- There is less ethnic diversity in the South West compared to some other regions in England. 96.9% of the population identify as White, which is reflected in the workforce and executives where 96.9% and 96.3% identify as White. The workforce is representative of the population for most ethnic groups, except Asian ethnic groups (0.65% of the workforce compared to 1.4% of the population). There is more ethnic diversity at board level than at population, though this could be due to low sample size and more data gaps.
- Staff and leaders in the region significantly underrepresent disabled people, with 6% of staff and 24% of the population disabled. For executives, 3% say they are disabled. Board members is just 1.4%, though half board member data is not known.

- For age, as with national figures, the workforce underrepresents younger ages (16-24 years) and those aged 65 or more, while being over representative of those aged 35-64 years. Executives are most likely to be 45-54 years (50%). For board members, 73% are aged 55+.
- The region has fewer Christians and more people who declare they have no religion when compared to population. 52% of the workforce say they have no religion, compared to 30% of the population (although this is likely because the 2011 Census data is not reflective of the current picture). Executives are more likely to be Christian (63%) when compared to population or staff. Boards are more diverse in terms of religion. For boards and executives, small sample sizes alongside data gaps make it difficult to know how distorted this picture is.
- For sexual orientation, 3.2% of the workforce for who we have data identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other sexual orientation, compared to 2.6% of the population by stock location (including don't know and prefer not to say). 10% of executives and 5% of boards identify as gay or lesbian (excluding don't know and prefer not to say). Again, small sample sizes alongside data gaps make it difficult to know how accurate this picture is.
- Marital or civil partnership status is largely representative of the population, though the older age of executives and boards means there is overrepresentation of those in the married group.
- It is difficult to conclude much on socio-economic background, gender identity or caring responsibilities due to the data gaps. The small sample sizes make it difficult to draw conclusions on available data.

Recommendations

Housing associations in the South West should work for:

- Better representation of disabled people.
- Increased Asian representation amongst staff.
- More young people (aged 16-24 years) in workforce and potentially younger age groups (aged 44 years or less) within leadership teams and boards.
- Improved data coverage through less unknown or undeclared data across all characteristics and groups, particularly at board level.