

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Annual Report
September 2022



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We are committed to supporting and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. This commitment is embraced by our board members and applies to all customers, colleagues and other stakeholders.

A leading
LGBTQIA+
friendly, inclusive
employer.



Introduction

Welcome to Riverside's first Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) Annual Report. As a charitable housing association, ED&I is central to what we do. It is a fundamental part of who we are – we care, we are trusted and we are courageous.

In this report we set out our overall approach to ED&I, bringing together information showing the progress we are making as we seek to tackle inequality and promote diversity and inclusion. We also identify areas where we have more to do. This is a defining issue for us, and it is important that we provide greater visibility of our plans, achievements and activities.

The Board has recently agreed a new Group-wide ED&I Policy, available on our website, setting out our main objectives and the principles which underpin our approach.

The policy covers all parts of the Group, including One Housing who joined as a subsidiary in December 2021, and we are now working together to integrate our approach to ED&I. We will reflect this in a new joint ED&I strategy that we will publish later this year. This report focuses on activities and achievements at Riverside prior to the merger.

The report is set out in several sections:

- how we manage and resource ED&I at Riverside
- identifying the composition of our customer and colleagues, by protected characteristic. This includes information on our pay gap reporting, also set out in our Financial Statements
- what we have achieved over the past year, including brief reports from each of our colleague groups
- the annual action plan agreed by our board for 2022/23.

ED&I is a
fundamental
part of who
we are.



LGBTQIA+ is an inclusive term that includes people of all genders and sexualities, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, queer, intersex, asexual, pansexual, and other identities. While each letter in LGBTQIA+ stands for a specific group of people, the term encompasses the entire spectrum of gender fluidity and sexual identities.

How we manage and resource Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We deliver a range of activities to deliver our objectives. While the approach we take is an embedded one – with all colleagues taking responsibility for ED&I in the way they interact with customers and colleagues in delivering services – the Group’s approach is facilitated by:

- a dedicated ED&I manager, servicing a Best Practice Group drawn from across the organisation
- the identification of Executive Director sponsors
- the production of an ED&I action plan each year, approved by Board and monitored by Executive Directors and Board. It includes measures for colleagues
- regular reporting to our Board and Executive Team, including against a set of performance indicators
- a network of very active colleague network groups (Origin, Enable and Spectrum)
- an extensive champions’ network across the whole business
- all colleagues completing mandatory ED&I e-learning each year.

We also work in very close partnership with other housing sector experts, such as the Housing Diversity Network (HDN), where we are active participants in both ED&I masterclasses and the colleague mentoring programme, which gives six colleagues each year access to mentoring opportunities.

We also work closely with the National Housing Federation (NHF) and the National Network for ED&I professionals, contributing to discussion at national level and sharing best practice.

A network of 150 ED&I champions across the group.



Our achievements

Over the last 12 months, there have been several highlights including:

- Being recognised by Stonewall as a leading LGBTQIA+ friendly, inclusive employer, placed at number 12 in their Top 100 Employers 2022 list based on their workplace equality index. This makes us the highest placed social housing provider in the country.
- Delivering a series of focus groups for customers from an ethnic minority background, providing insight into customer experience and engagement, leading to a number of customers expressing a wish to form a customer panel, to help us to review our services and enact change where it's required.
- Launching a new functionality within the My Riverside App, to allow customers to add or update their diversity data through a self-service approach.
- Successfully integrating Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) into our approach to Neighbourhood Planning, ensuring greater inclusion and equality of opportunity in the communities we work in.
- Ongoing activities to improve opportunities for all colleagues through mentoring and recruitment practices, with participation in the Housing Diversity Network's mentoring programme and the GEM graduate programme, to turn participants into future housing sector leaders.
- Launching our guaranteed interview scheme for job applicants from an ethnic minority background, which will help to address an under representation within our senior level roles. We offer job applicants a guaranteed interview for any manager and above level role and/or any role with a salary of £35,000 and above, if they meet the minimum criteria for that role.
- Representation of ethnic minority colleagues in the upper pay quartile has increased by 2.6% since the launch of the scheme.
- Successfully partnering with the HDN to create a national wellbeing network to share best practice in achieving good mental health and resilience.
- Seeing another successful cohort of mentees graduating from the HDN's mentoring programme, supporting colleagues to realise and maximise their potential.
- Creating a network of 150 ED&I Champions to influence, inform and support colleagues to ensure equality and inclusion for all is a part of everyday decision making.
- Upskilling training for our Mental Health Champions equipping them to support colleagues and to signpost customers to support organisations.
- Completing a successful third year of our reverse mentoring programme, where members of our Leadership Group have been mentored by colleagues with a disability, who are LGBTQIA+ or from an ethnic minority background.

No. 12 in
Stonewall's
Top 100
Employers
2022.

Composition of our colleagues and customers

To achieve our aims, it is important that we understand the composition of our Board and Committees, our Leadership Group, the wider workforce and our customers by the key protected characteristics, comparing this data with the profile of the population living in the communities we serve. We use this data at local level, enabling our colleagues to plan for their regional activities and their neighbourhood plans.

We remain committed to being open and transparent by publishing this data and the charts on the following pages show this comparison by sex, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion or belief.

From the data our customers have shared with us, our customer base looks like this:

- **24%** have told us they have a disability
- **58%** are female and **42%** are male
- **2%** have told us they are lesbian, gay or bisexual
- **9%** have an ethnicity other than white British
- **50%** have a religion or belief other than Christianity
- **26%** are aged over 65 and **19%** are under 35 years of age.

The above figures are for our population as a whole; it is important to note we do have significant regional variations.

We are currently running a campaign to encourage our colleagues to share their diversity data, so we can learn more about our workforce representation. This is what the profile of our colleagues currently looks like.

Sex – Compared to the wider population, Riverside has a higher proportion of females in our wider workforce (64%) and lower representation in our Leadership Group (37%) and governance community (46%).

Ethnicity – Compared to the wider population, Riverside has a higher proportion of colleagues from ethnic minorities across our workforce (19%).

Disability – We have a lower proportion of disabled people in our workforce, Leadership Group and governance community, compared to the wider population.

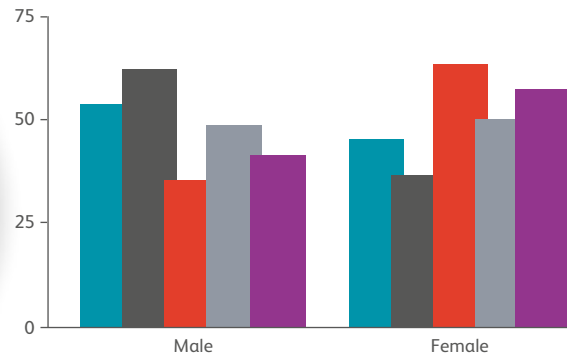
Sexual orientation – A high proportion of colleagues have shared their data, and for lesbian, gay and bisexual people, our Leadership group has 22% representation and our wider workforce 8%. This makes us more representative of lesbian, gay and bisexual people when compared to the wider population (2%).

Age – Apart from the youngest and oldest age groups, our wider workforce is generally well spread across the age bands. However, members of our Leadership Group are more represented in the 45-64 bands, and the governance community is concentrated in the 55+ bands.

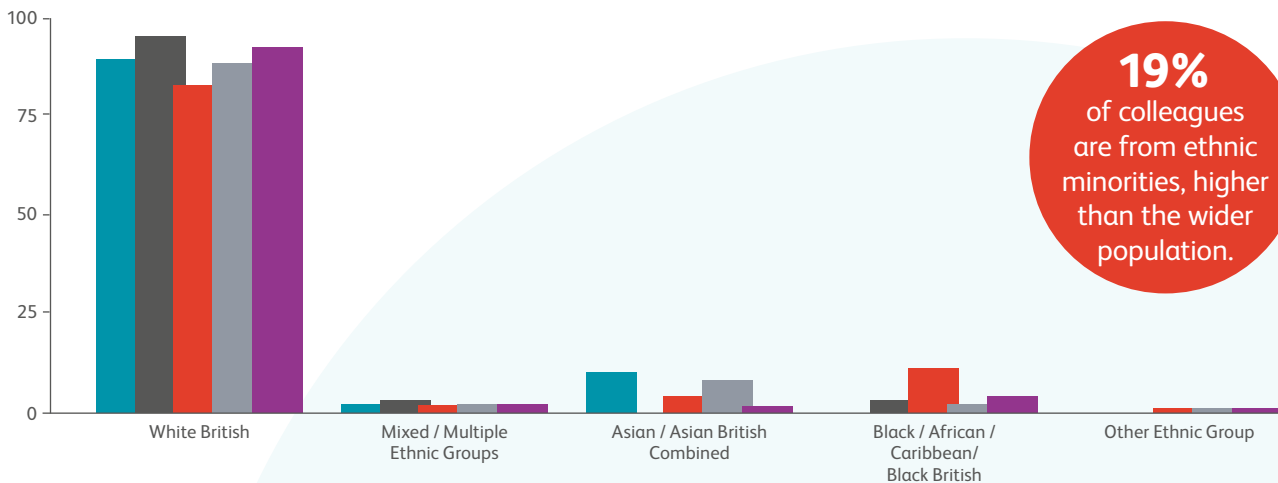
Religion or belief – Our governance community has 39% of members with a religion or belief other than Christianity, similar to that for the wider population (35%). Our Leadership Group and wider workforce have higher levels.

Key Equality and Diversity Metrics

Sex	Board & Committees	Leadership Group	Wider Workforce	Wider Population	Customers
Male	54%	63%	36%	49%	42%
Female	46%	37%	64%	51%	58%



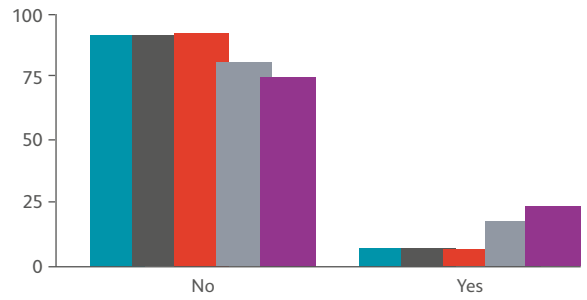
Ethnicity	Board & Committees	Leadership Group	Wider Workforce	Wider Population	Customers
White British	88%	94%	81%	87%	91%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%
Asian / Asian British Combined	10%	0%	5%	8%	2%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	0%	3%	11%	2%	4%
Other Ethnic Group	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%



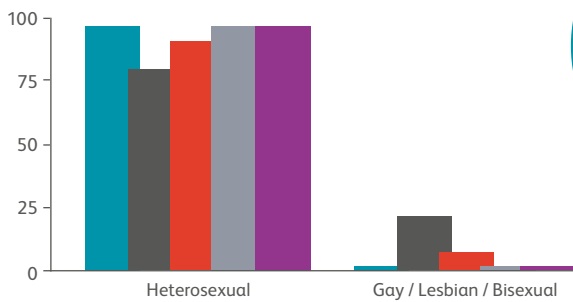
Disability	Board & Committees	Leadership Group	Wider Workforce	Wider Population	Customers
No	93%	93%	94%	82%	76%
Yes	7%	7%	6%	18%	24%



24%
of our
customers have
a disability.



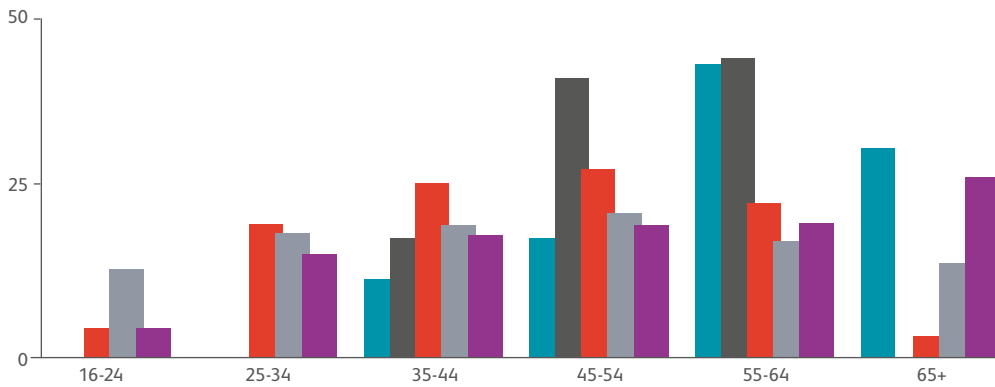
Sexual Orientation	Board & Committees	Leadership Group	Wider Workforce	Wider Population	Customers
Heterosexual	98%	78%	92%	98%	98%
Gay / Lesbian / Bisexual	2%	22%	8%	2%	2%



22%
of our Leadership
Group are
representative
of the LGBT
community.

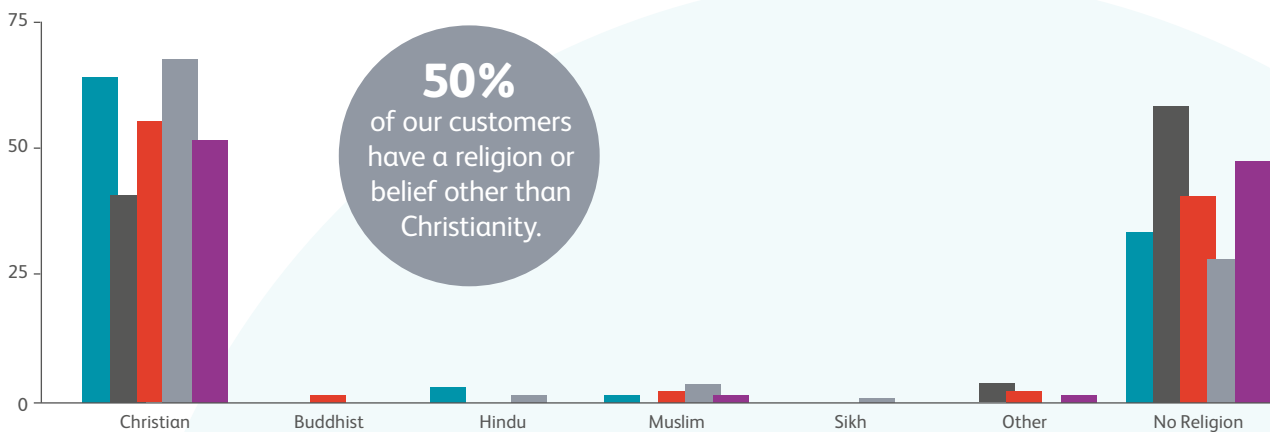


Age	Board & Committees	Leadership Group	Wider Workforce	Wider Population	Customers
16-24	0%	0%	4%	13%	4%
25-34	0%	0%	19%	18%	15%
35-44	11%	17%	25%	19%	17%
45-54	17%	40%	27%	21%	19%
55-64	42%	43%	22%	16%	19%
65+	30%	0%	3%	13%	26%



26%
of our customers are aged 65 or over.

Religion	Board & Committees	Leadership Group	Wider Workforce	Wider Population	Customers
Christian	61%	39%	53%	65%	50%
Buddhist	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Hindu	4%	0%	0%	2%	0%
Muslim	2%	0%	3%	5%	2%
Sikh	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Other	0%	5%	3%	0%	2%
No Religion	33%	56%	39%	27%	46%



50%
of our customers have a religion or belief other than Christianity.

Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap

Publishing and monitoring pay gaps helps us understand the reasons for any gap and consider what action we need to take to tackle the causes.

Gender Pay Gap 2022

Our median pay gap is 4.4% (and the mean pay gap is 11.6%), having decreased from our 2021 snapshot data of 7.2% (and 12.2% respectively). Females occupying roles in our upper and upper middle pay quartile roles have reduced slightly from 2021.

Ethnicity Pay Gap 2022

Our median ethnicity pay gap is 11.5% (and mean is 17.3%), a decrease from our 2021 snapshot data (of 14% and 17.5% respectively).

Our ethnic minority colleagues' representation has increased in all our top three pay quartiles, with the lower quartile remaining static which is driving the improvement in our pay gap.

We have been targeting progression through our ethnic minorities Action Plan and Talent Acquisition Strategy.

Differences

The gender and ethnicity pay gaps are not because of different rates of pay, but a high proportion of female and colleagues from an ethnic minority background in our lower quartile roles in Care and Support and a comparative under representation within our upper quartile roles.

Next steps

We will continue to focus on:

- listening to our colleagues to improve experience and provide opportunities for growth and progression, working in partnership with Origin, our employee group.
- continuing to target representation in our upper quartile roles and removing any barriers to progression.
- ensuring we are attracting talented colleagues to our organisation through our ethnic minorities Talent Acquisition Strategy.
- promotion of flexible working practices, development opportunities and vacancies for all.

Further information

We are required to publish our gender pay gap annually based on a snapshot of our payroll on 5 April each year. You can find full copies of the pay gap reports in the Financial Statements at www.riverside.org.uk



Colleague groups



In 1981, shortly after the Toxteth Riots in Liverpool, we established Riverside's network for colleagues from an ethnic minority background, Origin.

Our group acts as a forum for improving and promoting equal opportunities and diversity within Riverside and the communities it serves. We aim to provide information, guidance and support to enable colleagues to fulfil their potential within the organisation and to offer a platform to share ideas, concerns and best practice.

The group meets on a quarterly basis to review progress against its action plan and to discuss and celebrate all things race. The Executive Sponsor and Chair conduct the meetings and we invite allies and guest speakers to share best practice and outcomes from listening sessions.

Achievements

- Contributed to our 'Call it Out' initiative which enables colleagues to report discrimination and helped to develop a guaranteed interview scheme for job applicants from an ethnic minority background.
- Further assisted career progression by participating in our reverse mentoring programme, along with the other colleague networks, which matches junior colleagues with a leadership mentee. Origin members have shared their life experiences and any barriers they have faced in career progression due to their ethnicity, which has provided senior leaders with valuable insight to enable them to influence real change within the organisation.
- Participated in the Greater Manchester Housing Provider's 'Championing Change for BAME Leadership' programme. A unique partnership and research programme with Manchester Metropolitan University which aims to address the under-representation of employees from an ethnic minority background in leadership positions in the housing sector.



We are aware that there are many sensitivities around language. Different people feel differently about the same terms, even when they share a similar background and as an organisation, we are currently discussing the use of the term 'BAME' with our colleagues and customers as we keep pace with updates in language and terminology.



Enable was founded in 1985 by members who wished to support colleagues with a disability.

We aim to provide assistance and information to all colleagues who experience short or long-term disability or illness, to influence policy and procedures, support managers and enable colleagues to carry out their roles regardless of any impairment, mental health or hidden disability.

Achievements

- Upskilled our network of Mental Health Champions across the organisation, supporting them to support other colleagues, by providing them with toolkits and other resources, which managers and leaders can also access.
- Ensured that all policies and procedures with a direct impact on colleagues are reviewed to ensure any potential for unequal impact on colleagues with a disability or long-term health condition are mitigated for via equality impact assessments.
- Developed colleague-led peer support groups for cancer, menopause, parents, and bereavement, enabling colleagues to share experiences and support others who may be experiencing similar circumstances.
- Collaborated with IT colleagues to produce accessibility features for conditions such as dyslexia when working with Microsoft applications and to provide backgrounds for colleagues to use in virtual meetings to make other colleagues aware of a disability or impairment that may affect their participation in the meeting.
- Promoted and celebrated regular national and global disability awareness dates, communicating to all colleagues, to increase awareness and understanding.





Spectrum is our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender colleague network. It is for anyone with an interest in LGBTQIA+ issues, offering the opportunity to contribute towards the development of policies, procedures, systems and the impact they have on LGBTQIA+ issues. Spectrum also offers confidential support and guidance for LGBTQIA+ colleagues and managers.

Our allies' network, Friends of Spectrum, supports our LGBTQIA+ network and gets involved in events and celebrations.

Achievements

- Worked towards three key areas of accreditation, communication and engagement.
- Continued to engage with our colleague community and members, delivered several bespoke sessions on everything LGBTQIA+ and how to be an ally.
- Commissioned specific trans awareness training, delivered by a former Merseyside police detective made even more impactful by his lived experience. This was so successful we have recommissioned the training for November this year to tie in with Trans Awareness Week.
- Ensured that all remembrance and visibility events have been communicated internally and externally such as Pride, Lesbian Visibility Week and IDAHOBILIT.
- Co-produced vlogs on LGBTQIA+ issues and the community with customers from our Manchester based LGBTQIA+ A Bed Every Night service, empowering our customers and helping to educate colleagues to understand the issues that LGBTQIA+ customers could face.



Working with customers

Our new approach to customer involvement and engagement, launched in September 2021, means we have been able to increase our focus on improving and expanding our customer engagement structures and using targeted customer insight to ensure the customer voice is heard throughout the organisation.

By engaging more meaningfully with all customers, and fully embracing the diversity and customer voice we have, we can better shape our Community Involvement and Engagement (CI&E) Policy and Strategy.

We will develop our strategy using a variety of methods, including:

- consultation results on governance and scrutiny.
- Riverside Customer Voice Executive (RCVE) partnership.
- targeted engagement via specialist groups (LGBTQIA+, ethnic minorities, disabled and more).
- digital engagement (iCommunity, Facebook hubs, website, and other platforms where possible).
- co-production in Care and Support to ensure customers are involving in shaping services.



The CI&E team challenges and supports all parts of the business to ensure that the customer is considered first and foremost in all service delivery and improvements. We have introduced customer journey mapping, and customer stories to bring the customer experience to life, providing insight to drive service improvements.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2022-23

Each year we produce an ED&I action plan, which is approved by Group Board. Our action plan for 2022-23 has priorities which are designed to further improve our approach to achieving greater inclusion and equality for customers and colleagues, by ensuring that we prioritise the following areas.

Strategy development

- Develop a Group-wide ED&I Strategy for the new enlarged Group.
- Devise a new performance measurement framework (including for customers).
- Publish first ED&I annual report for ongoing public reporting on our performance and activities.

Improving the awareness of our governance community

- Explore and identify routes for the engagement of diverse customers within the governance community.
- Continue to raise awareness of ED&I with boards and committee members by providing access to new online ED&I training module.

Improving diversity data

- Following the launch of the diversity function within the My Riverside App, implement a communications campaign with users to encourage them to complete missing data on protected characteristics.

Diversifying customer engagement

- Address recommendations coming from focus groups for people from diverse backgrounds and devise action plan to encourage greater engagement.
- Review the diversity profile of the iCommunity and deliver an active campaign to recruit customers across protected characteristics where we are under-represented.
- Skill new Riverside Customer Voice Executive members with a training programme to understand ED&I, equalities legislation, assumptions and bias, and EIAs, ensuring they are able to effectively challenge Riverside when reviewing policies, strategies and services.

Driving equality considerations in merger integration activities

- Ensure all key merger integration projects which impact on customers and colleagues are subject to an EIA to ensure inclusion and equality of opportunity.

Bringing together our colleague networks

- Working with colleague networks at both Riverside and One Housing to plan and implement their integration and greater co-operation.

We recognise we have more to do and will continually develop our approach to ED&I. By producing this, our first ever ED&I annual report, we seek to improve our transparency and accountability in relation to our activities and performance.


For more information, please contact the Strategy and Planning team at strategy.planning@riverside.org.uk



Get in touch or find out more

 www.riverside.org.uk
email: info@riverside.org.uk
Follow us on Twitter @RiversideUK

Customer Service Centre

 **24 hours, 365 days a year.** So you can call at the weekend or even on Christmas Day
0345 111 0000

 Speak to a member of our team

 We are happy to accept **Relay UK** calls.

The Riverside Group Limited

Registered Office:
2 Estuary Boulevard,
Estuary Commerce Park,
Liverpool L24 8RF

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