

who

we are



The National Housing Federation's  
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

**NATIONAL  
HOUSING  
FEDERATION**



## A message from our Chief Executive, Kate Henderson

I am proud to lead an organisation whose staff, Leadership Team and board are passionate champions for equality, diversity and inclusion.

I am also proud to be part of a talented workforce that wants and deserves a plan of action to do everything we can on this critical agenda. My starting point for our organisational culture is that we are all human beings with unique identities, our own responsibilities, different ways of thinking, and lives outside of the NHF.

This mix of who we are as individuals is an asset to the NHF and we need to embrace it.

This strategy sets out for the first time, in one place, the NHF's commitment to addressing equality, diversity and inclusion in our workforce. That commitment is a cornerstone of who we are as an organisation.

The NHF is the voice of a sector driven by its social purpose, and by serving the people and communities who need us most across the country.

Our three-year business strategy makes clear that in the period 2019-22 we will deliver excellent service to our members and stakeholders – including by demonstrating our commitment to improving equality, diversity and inclusion in our organisation.

We have a lot to welcome in terms of the people policies we have in place at the NHF, and much progress to build on as we look to improve equality, diversity and inclusion. As things stand, our workforce, and our leadership, are not as diverse as they should be or could be. This strategy is a vital step forward in putting this right.

Leadership Team and I are firmly committed to the vision, ambition and activities outlined in this strategy and to working with our staff to deliver them. This document lays out for our staff, and potential staff, what they can expect from the NHF, and we are proud to share it with the wider sector.

**“I know that our staff are our most valuable asset”**

# The NHF's vision for equality, diversity and inclusion

Our vision is to foster a culture of trust and openness where all staff can flourish and their unique experiences and perspectives are valued by everyone at the NHF. Our policies and practice will facilitate an equitable workplace where people experiencing disadvantage are enabled and encouraged to contribute their full potential. Our high-performing workforce will be more diverse and will reflect the diversity of the society we live in. Our organisational culture will be one where all colleagues are treated with dignity, respect and fairness.

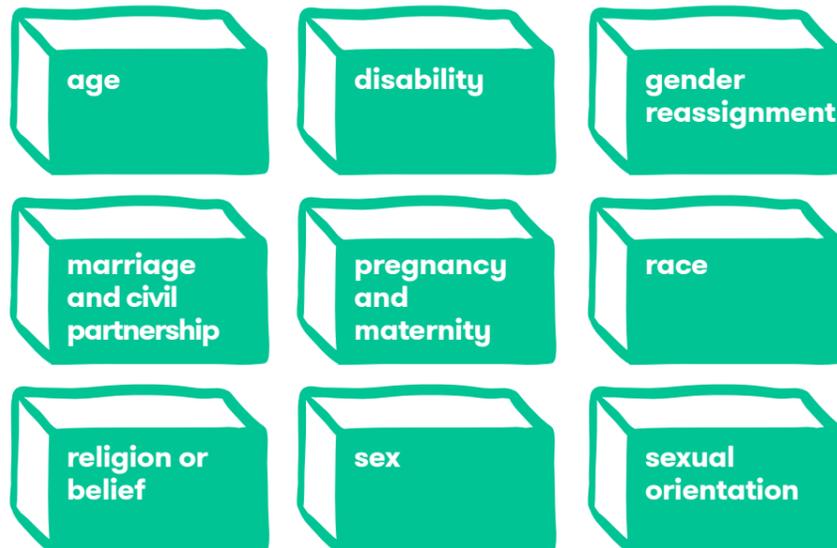
As a trade body, we have a key role to play in demonstrating leadership on diversity, equality and inclusion, and in supporting our housing association members to be the best that they can be and ensuring our sector can lead the way on equality, diversity and inclusion.

A separate work programme aims for the NHF to demonstrate sector leadership on diversity and inclusion and we are working with a group of members to deliver this.



## The nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

Where appropriate we have used alternative terms which we believe are more inclusive throughout our strategy, such as 'gender' and 'ethnicity'.



**Equality** is ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are treated fairly and not discriminated against because of their characteristics. The Equality Act provides protection from discrimination on nine protected characteristics.

**Equity** is treating individuals fairly based on their needs and requirements. Equity ensures that all the individuals are provided the resources they need to have access to the same opportunities.

**Diversity** is about recognising and embracing difference, based not just on protected characteristics. Placing positive value on the benefits of the different perspectives and experiences everyone brings enriches the workplace.

**Inclusion** is where everyone feels that they belong, that their contribution matters and they are able to perform to their full potential, no matter their background or circumstances.



## Where we are now: February 2020

This strategy is the NHF's commitment to doing everything we can to deliver a workforce that matches the diversity of our society, at all levels of our organisation. The strategy has been co-created with our staff-led internal diversity and inclusion group.

The group's enthusiasm, initiative and constructive challenge have been a driving force behind our progress so far.

- **Test out ideas for new or improved approaches.**
- **Develop our culture across the organisation.**
- **Provide opportunities for staff to learn about diversity issues, and celebrate a diverse range of events and awareness campaigns.**
- **Review progress and provide constructive challenge.**

Now, every staff member is responsible for creating change and Leadership Team are fully committed to championing equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work.

Our staff are incredibly passionate and knowledgeable about diversity and inclusion. We will continue to work with the NHF's internal working group on equality, diversity and inclusion to:

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against people at work because of the nine areas termed in the legislation as protected characteristics. The NHF aims to go above and beyond this legal requirement, by actively encouraging and enabling a diverse workforce, and fostering a workplace which champions equity.

One of the measures of our diversity as an employer is our staff profile and demographics. We publish, internally and externally, staff diversity data for protected characteristics (see p.18).

Although our data shows that we have a long way to go before we are truly reflective of society, in some areas we are making real progress.

- **In our April 2019 report on our gender pay data, we saw no significant difference between male and female staff pay overall.**
- **Our staffing profile is considered to be broadly reflective of the LGBT+ community.**
- **We have had some success with improving Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) representation on our board, which is now 25% from BAME backgrounds.**
- **In terms of BAME representation, we have a long way to go before we are representative of the London profile (where our largest number of staff are employed). Our management teams in particular are not ethnically diverse.**
- **Only a small percentage of our staff consider themselves to have a disability and there is a strong impetus for us to improve in this area of diversity.**



We have a long way to go before our workforce is genuinely representative of society but measuring and understanding our key demographic profiles will help us to understand how the initiatives we put in place are making a difference. As we have a relatively small workforce, small changes will have a big impact on our diversity statistics in the short term, so it's important that we take a long-term view of our progress.

# What we've been doing

Data is important for understanding the success of our initiatives, but workforce profiles do not change overnight. We are confident that we have the foundations in place to make change happen.

We have commitment from our board, Leadership Team and our staff. We talk about diversity and inclusion in everyday worklife, and it is becoming integral to how we do things.

In practice, this means we have introduced a staff-led diversity and

- **In 2017 the NHF had no BAME board members and we recognised this was unacceptable. Since then, our board recruitment has been explicit about our under-representation and our ambition to better reflect society. We've advertised in specialist media, given clear direction to recruitment specialists and adopted the Rooney Rule when shortlisting.**

inclusion group to give everybody an opportunity to shape how we do things. Almost one third of our workforce are members of this group.

We are trialling new ways of doing things, such as applying the Rooney Rule to all external recruitment. We have a consistent and transparent approach to recruitment more generally, and we have introduced a suite of internal initiatives.

- **We have a staff training programme to support diversity and inclusion, including disability awareness, unconscious bias, management training, managing professional relationships and mental health awareness.**
- **We introduced a range of staff-led initiatives to raise awareness of issues related to equality, diversity and inclusion.**



- **We have a suite of policies to attract and retain a diverse workforce, including flexible working and enhanced maternity, paternity, shared parental, adoption and sick leave.**
- **We report on key staff diversity data internally and externally.**
- **We voluntarily report on our gender pay data and have committed to voluntarily reporting on our ethnicity pay data.**
- **We are trialling the Rooney Rule for recruitment.**
- **We are members of Women in Social Housing (WISH), the Housing Diversity Network (HDN) and the London Housing and Diversity Group.**
- **We are a Disability Confident employer.**
- **We are communicating our commitment to diversity and inclusion to all our audiences, including potential job applicants.**
- **We signed up to the Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse and the Chartered Institute of Housing's Make a Stand supporters pledge, and introduced a domestic abuse policy.**
- **We recommitted to the Future of London speakers pledge, and we are improving the diversity of speakers at our own conferences.**
- **We are committed to reflecting the diversity of society in our media spokespeople, our blog authors and our national member groups.**

# Diversity training

NHF staff who have taken part in diversity training over the last few years have shared the following anonymous feedback about different courses.

**“Useful opportunity to discuss with colleagues, and the right level of challenge”**

– NHF staff member feedback on unconscious bias training

**“Extremely useful training session, challenged my thinking. Very worthwhile.”**

– NHF staff member feedback on disability awareness training

**“Everyone should be aware of their own biases. Very useful, thank you!”**

– NHF staff member feedback on unconscious bias training

**“I felt very safe asking questions in this training.”**

– NHF staff member feedback on disability awareness training

**“I really enjoyed learning more about the Deaf community and learning the right way to guide.”**

– NHF staff member feedback on disability awareness training

# What we want to achieve

Our overall ambition is for the NHF to become a more diverse organisation, and to be seen as diverse and inclusive by our members and by our staff. Specifically, by 2025 our aims are that:

1. **The NHF is an inclusive workplace where everyone feels they belong.**
2. **We attract and grow diverse talent at all levels, including the board.**
3. **We have built trust with our staff and those interested in joining the NHF workforce, through transparency.**

This action plan covers our work relating to the nine protected characteristics in particular. It is not an exhaustive list of all of the actions we will implement and we are open to adding more activities to our programme. Subsequent phases of our diversity and inclusion work are likely to cover social mobility in addition to the nine protected characteristics.

## How we're going to do it

Our ambitions are big, but as a relatively small organisation, we have limited resources, including a small People team, the director of which is responsible for the NHF's internal diversity strategy. To ensure we make the most of our limited resources, all staff are encouraged to participate in the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda and to lead different initiatives. Equality, diversity and inclusion is very much everyone's responsibility and collaboration across the NHF is key to making change happen.

## How we're going to measure it

Our key overall measures will be the comparison of our staff demographics to national diversity statistics. We will also measure the success of specific actions through staff feedback and involvement levels, member feedback, the diversity of job applicants, and whether we have all of the appropriate policies in place.

# Our action plan

## Objective 1: The NHF is an inclusive workplace where everyone feels they belong

### To achieve this objective, we will:

- Continue to work closely with our internal diversity and inclusion working group.
- Ensure diversity and inclusion is everyone's responsibility to champion, and integral to how we do things.
- Provide training that enhances diversity and inclusion.
- Deliver a programme of staff-led initiatives that support diversity and inclusion.
- Ensure where possible, staff can balance personal responsibilities and interests with the needs of the business.
- Ensure our technology supports different ways of working.

- Ensure where possible that all colleagues, regardless of their working locations, can participate in projects, events and initiatives.
- Review and improve the diversity of our media spokespeople, blog authors and conference speakers.
- Continue to be active members of organisations that share our ambitions for diversity and inclusion such as the HDN, WISH and HouseProud.
- Measure our progress by surveying our staff on their sense of belonging.

**Our action plan outlines the building blocks we'll put in place to achieve our objectives, and forms our initial workplan until December 2020.**



**Objective 2: We attract diverse talent at all levels, including the board**

**To achieve this objective, we will:**

- Update our careers website to ensure it's accessible and includes appropriate language and imagery.
- Introduce new recruitment guidelines setting out our approach to attracting diverse talent and removing barriers.
- Ensure the principles of diversity and inclusion are integral to the recruitment training we provide for managers.
- Evaluate our trial of the Rooney Rule initiative, and if successful, continue the approach.
- Review our success as a Disability Confident employer, and if successful, advance our accreditation.
- Advertise our vacancies in a range of accessible media.



**Objective 3: We have built trust through transparency**

**To achieve this objective, we will:**

- Publish biannual staff diversity data on our intranet and website.
- Voluntarily report on our gender pay gap internally and externally.
- Voluntarily report on our ethnicity pay gap internally and externally.

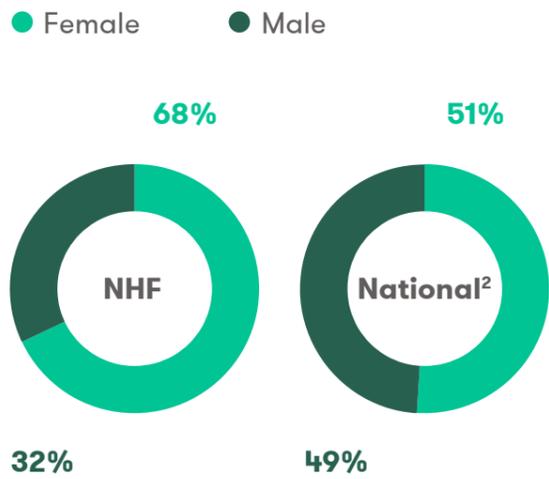
**By being honest and transparent we will build trust with those interested in joining the NHF workforce, and with our existing staff.**

# Our diversity data

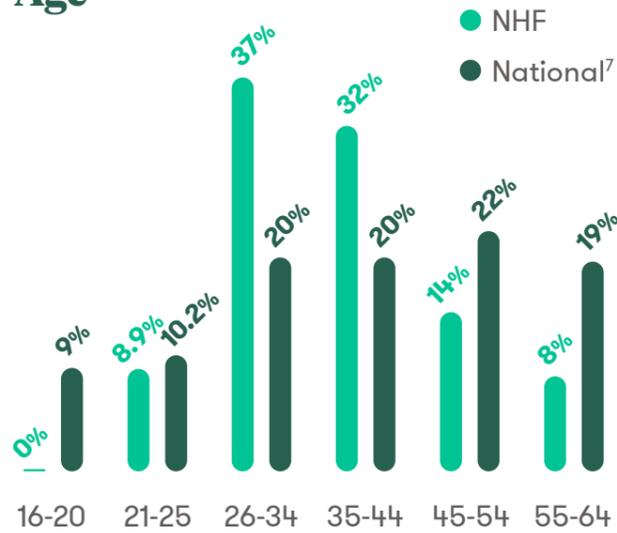
All NHF data is from January 2020.

Our target is to reflect the national figures as closely as possible.

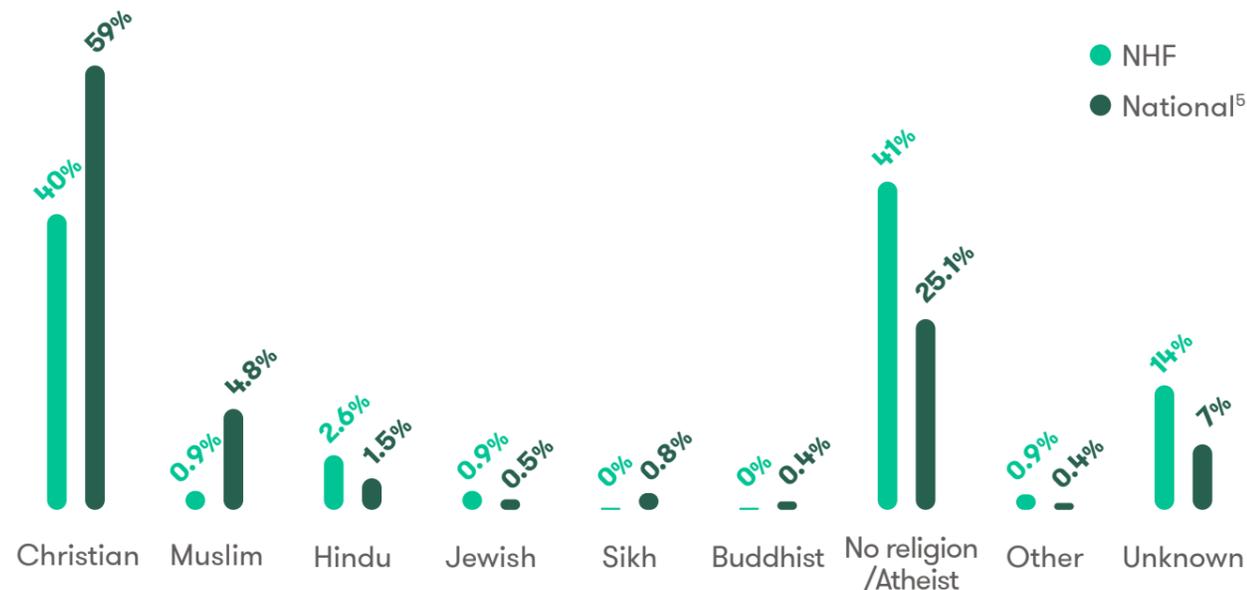
## Gender



## Age

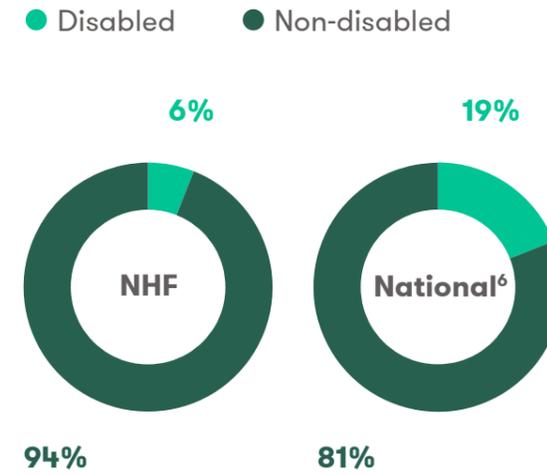


## Religion



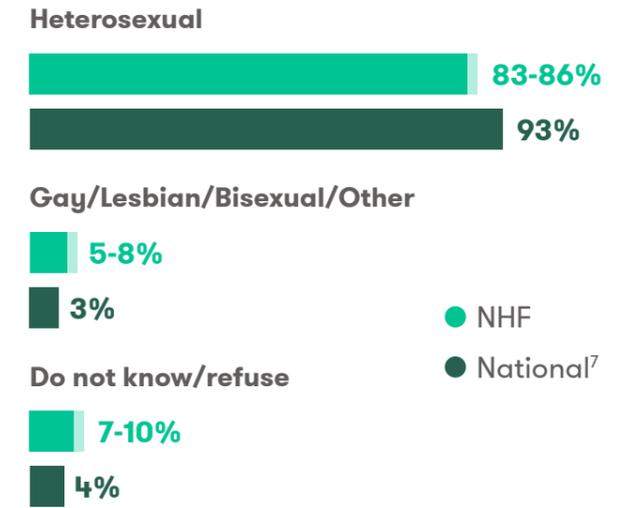
## Disability

6% of our staff consider themselves to have a disability, compared to the 19% national average.



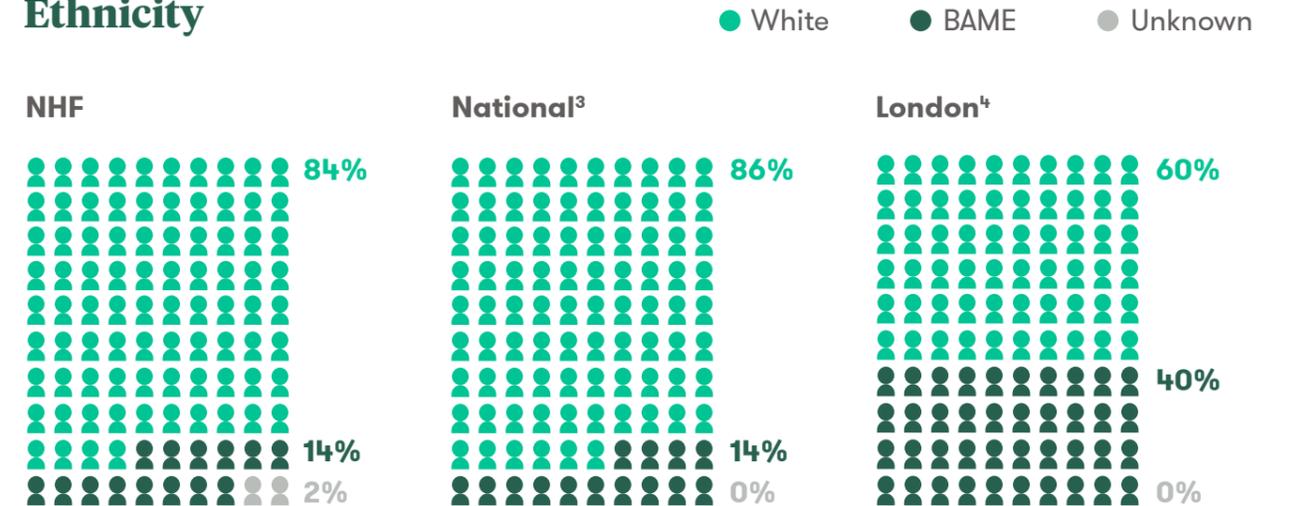
## Sexual orientation

These figures are given as ranges.



Note: Other sources suggest that ONS data under-reports the LGB population.

## Ethnicity



Our target is that 30% of our staff are from a BAME background, reflecting the fact that 80% of our staff are based in London.

<sup>2</sup> Source: ONS mid-year population estimates 2018, <sup>3</sup> Source: 2011 Census, <sup>4</sup> Source: 2011 Census, <sup>5</sup> Source: 2011 Census, <sup>6</sup> Source: ONS mid-year population estimates 2018, <sup>7</sup> Office for National Statistics - Annual Population Survey (2017), <sup>8</sup> Source: ONS Mid-year population estimates, 2018

**Who We Are** is the NHF's internal diversity strategy, published in March 2020. This document lays out to our staff what they can expect from our diversity and inclusion work, and we are proud to share it with colleagues in the housing sector and beyond.

If you have any questions, please contact Clive Liggett, Director of People, on [clive.liggett@housing.org.uk](mailto:clive.liggett@housing.org.uk)



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