

Equity, diversity and inclusion strategy

2022 – 2025 (with an annual review)



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Foreword from Sarah Boden, CEO

In 2022, we set out our new corporate plan, 'progressive and resilient through change'. The new plan focuses on delivering better homes and improved services for the thousands of customers across our regions, against a challenging backdrop of changes to regulation and economic pressures facing our sector.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is a key focus for our Group, we want all our stakeholders to have a sense of openness and belonging when interacting with us.

We have chosen to use the word equity in the title of this strategy as it refers to fair treatment for all people, so that the norms, practices, and policies in place ensure identity is not predictive of opportunities or workplace outcomes.

Equity differs from equality in a subtle but important way. While equality assumes that all people should be treated the same, equity takes into consideration a person's unique circumstances, adjusting treatment accordingly so that the end result is equal.

Achieving equity, diversity and inclusion will enable us to enhance our Group's performance and social value, leaving a sustainable legacy across our communities. As a provider of social housing, care and support services, we have a desire and responsibility to ensure that our services are accessible, fair and respectful for our tenants, customers, colleagues and stakeholders, regardless of their background, identity or circumstances. Diverse and inclusive teams make better decisions, and EDI presents an opportunity to

be focused on the multiple needs of our communities and the people who live in them, as well as improving employee engagement, innovation and efficiency.

This strategy sets out our approach for advancing EDI across our Group and through our partnerships with contractors and suppliers. It aligns with our corporate values and aims, as well the wider legal and social value agenda.

It is recognised that we are very much at the start of our EDI journey and it will require commitment, leadership, and collaboration from all involved. We are determined to fulfil those commitments to you, our tenants, customers, colleagues, board members, contractors, suppliers and regulators – to create an inclusive culture where everyone feels valued and respected.

I am pleased to launch our three-year EDI strategy, which I hope will inspire you to make our EDI commitments a reality for our Group and across our communities.



Sarah Boden

Chief executive, Housing Plus Group

Introduction

At Housing Plus Group, equity, diversity and inclusion must be considered in all that we do; from the way we do business, to the way that we offer and deliver our services to customers, stakeholders and colleagues.

We are proud to launch our first Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy for the Group. It underpins our corporate plan by further setting out our vision and commitments to creating places to live and work where everybody is respected, valued and able to be their true authentic selves.

Our values offer a guideline for the way we treat others and the way we behave as individuals. This means acting in a way that is not intended – or reasonably expected – to cause offence to others, including voicing extreme views.

Our corporate plan aims to transform the customer experience and build on our diverse and inclusive workforce to deliver our services in a way that respects the individual needs of our communities and the wider society. We know that in doing so it will help us to understand and respond to our customer needs better.

As a leading provider of quality, affordable homes and care services in Staffordshire and Shropshire, we employ almost 1,000 staff and provide more than 20,000 homes.

Our vision is simple, **a resilient organisation making a positive difference to the homes, lives and communities** that we serve, which is underpinned by our values:

Communication

Providing communication that is timely, open, honest, clear and consistent.

Learning

Committed to seeking knowledge, innovating and adopting new ways of working to enhance the work of the Group.

Accountable

Taking responsibility for our actions and performance, providing support and ideas to seek solutions.

Respectful

Being polite and considerate, understanding the needs of others, respecting and valuing their views.

Inclusive

Working together to create an environment that celebrates differences and embraces diversity of thought.

Trust

Acting with integrity at all times, empowering our colleagues and seeking assurance that others will do the same.

You

Taking personal responsibility for living and embodying our values. Acknowledging that colleagues, customers and stakeholders all have an important part to play in the success of the Group

Equity, diversity and inclusion at Housing Plus Group

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) often go hand in hand, but the concepts are quite different. At Housing Plus Group, EDI goes beyond compliance — we recognise the value of ensuring these principles are embedded in all that we say and do.

Equity

Where our customers, colleagues and stakeholders benefit equally from opportunities, regardless of their background, identity, or experience.

Diversity

Recognises that, though people have things in common with each other, they are also different in many ways. Harnessing diversity and authenticity creates richer perspectives and encourages innovation, and in its broadest sense promotes diversity of thought, practice and approach. In doing so it will allow us to improve how we support our customers and communities, as well as supporting our colleagues.

Inclusion

Where those differences are seen as a benefit, and where perspectives and differences are shared, this leads to better decisions. We recognise the importance of this and aim to involve our customers, colleagues and stakeholders in our plans and activities, ensuring that their views are heard and respected.



Our local context

The data held by HPG in relation to equity, diversity and inclusion is limited and work is required to improve its quality. Whilst we are addressing this, the absence of a single housing management system and a workforce system that is the amalgamation of three legacy systems, mean that we are starting from a relatively low base in terms of data quality.

We do know, however, something about the populations we serve and how our workforce compares in the areas of gender, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation and age. Those of note are summarised below - see appendix 1 for full details.

Across both our stock locations, the ethnicity data confirmed that we have relatively low population numbers identifying as Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME). With 95% across Staffordshire and Shropshire recording

as White-British, compared with 83% of our workforce identifying also as White-British.

The data tool also identified over 20% of the local population having a disability which they consider as work limiting, compared to 3% of our workforce having recorded themselves as having a disability related condition.

The Group is well represented across the 25 – 65 age range in comparison to the local populations. There is a slight under representation across the 16-24 age group, mirroring the national and wider regional trend.

Further work needs to be done around data collection for both our workforce and customer communities.

The analysis of our current workforce data against our stock location has helped to shape and inform our EDI priorities and action planning.



Our strategic themes

Our approach is driven by the belief that success in EDI lies with our people, promoting a culture which values talent that goes beyond labels; supporting each person to reach their full potential. We recognise that to deliver this aspiration, our day-to-day activities must be set up in a way which enables its achievement. We will therefore continue to review our practices to ensure that they are equitable, and where structural barriers exist, they are understood and addressed.

Our EDI strategy comprises, four key themes which are fundamental to creating and promoting a culture of openness and inclusivity. These themes encompass best practice that can be applied to our business.

Leadership

We will ensure our commitments to EDI are enabled, demonstrated and recognisable from our leaders and across all our activities, including our strategic partners and contractors.

Customer inclusion and engagement

We will deepen our knowledge of the needs of our customers and communities to improve the quality of life for our residents, individually and collectively.

Employee inclusion and engagement

We will develop a culture of belonging, where colleagues can be their authentic self and can contribute to creating a great place to work.

Cultural metrics

We will understand and develop our cultural metrics to better inform our wider business priorities and integrate EDI into our ways of working.



Our objectives

Our objectives have been developed with the belief that equity, diversity and inclusion yield positive outcomes for the people who need and use our services. The success we achieve enables us to deliver our vision and better support those which we serve. They have also helped shape our plan for the next three years.

1. To foster a culture of openness and belonging that aligns with our EDI priorities and to take action to eliminate inequitable practices.
2. To provide high-quality services that are responsive to the diverse needs of the communities in a manner that they feel includes them.
3. To foster inclusive work environments that empower everyone to have a voice and equal opportunity to grow, contribute, advance, and be recognised; eliminating internal barriers that cause disadvantage.
4. To develop our data and information system(s) so that we can better understand our communities and workforce, and deliver services that reflect the diversity of our population.

Implementation and monitoring our progress

This strategy and its priorities have been developed in consultation with the Group's employee voice forum, customer panel, executive team and board members and sets out the Group's overarching priorities and a set of desired outcomes, which underpin those targets set out in our 2022-2025 corporate plan.

To ensure that our objectives are achieved, the housing team will lead on the implementation and monitoring of the action plan, with the support of our business areas.

Progress against the plan will be reported and reviewed at executive level annually and an annual update will be provided to our boards.

Our three-year EDI action plan

The Group will use a framework of Engage, Measure and Act when it comes to the management and scrutiny of data and supporting the development of our cultural metrics.

We will engage with our colleagues, customers and stakeholders in a way where we proactively scrutinise behaviours, attitudes and practices. We will measure using tools that are available to us and act on the data to implement interventions and address areas that need further developing.

Year 1 - 2023

Required outcome	Linked objective	Actions	By whom	Review deadline
1. Develop a suite of meaningful EDI data for our customers	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use the National Housing Federation (NHF) / Office of National Statistics (ONS) data to review and assess our current baseline EDI position for customers. Agree criteria for EDI data collection and develop methods for collection. ▶ Create a set of reportable EDI indicators of improvement for customers. 	Director of housing	August 2023
2. Improve the quality and accuracy of our workforce EDI data, to enable us to measure and monitor our progress towards our EDI cultural metrics	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Collect and update personal data from the workforce using self service, increasing participation by 5% yearly ▶ Analyse the data; identifying and addressing any data quality issues or gaps in the data. ▶ Develop a communication plan that aims to build understanding, trust and confidence across the Group on how the data supports us in addressing barriers that impact their engagement and help to create a more inclusive work environment. 	Head of people	August 2023

Required outcome	Linked objective	Actions	By whom	Review deadline
3. Roll out a business impact assessment tool that supports the wider business in ensuring EDI is duly considered in its policy, business and decision making	2 & 4	<p>Assess the impact on service delivery of the exercise of ‘public function’ duties (when these apply) and address findings.</p> <p>Develop a tool that duly considers EDI as part of business policy, business planning and decision making. Ensure the tool supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identifying whether services are excluding groups / individuals ▶ Identifying and eliminating direct or indirect discrimination ▶ Identifying impact on minority groups ▶ Targeting of resources more effectively to meet the needs of diverse communities 	<p>Director of legal and governance</p> <p>Director of housing</p>	<p>August 2023</p>
4. Develop a plan that addresses gaps in EDI considerations/ assessments across all training and development programmes	3 & 4	<p>Complete a review across all training and development initiatives to ensure that, where appropriate, affirmative action is taken.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Raising awareness and understanding of EDI issues across our workforce and for our customers ▶ Integrating EDI topics into induction programmes, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and all other Learning and development programmes ▶ Fair and transparent recruitment and selection processes, developing plans to raise further awareness and tools on understanding and managing unconscious bias. ▶ Ensure our L&D offer is accessible, equitable and inclusive 	<p>Head of people</p>	<p>September 2023</p>

Required outcome	Linked objective	Actions	By whom	Review deadline
5. Develop a plan to engage with under engaged communities, to improve understanding of their needs	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Grow and diversify the ‘involved customer group’ to ensure it is inclusive and reflective of our customer base ▶ Develop and increase the choice of customer communication platforms available to meet customer need and preference ▶ Increase the opportunities that encourage customer engagement, considering opportunities in the community or at different customer journey touchpoints 	Director of housing	December 2023
6. Ensure our recruitment practices are inclusive, support equal opportunities, and do not inadvertently place groups or individuals at a disadvantage	3	<p>A complete review of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Candidate experiences ▶ Training for managers in recruitment and selection ▶ Job profiles and the language being used ▶ Branding – remove unintentional gender bias ▶ Where we advertise to target those harder to reach and minority groups ▶ Partnership working with our Community Hubs to increase customer engagement and share employment opportunities with our customers ▶ Our partnerships with local learning establishments and increase engagement with 16–24-year olds ▶ Our plan to enhance our digital marketing 	Head of people	December 2023
7. Rebrand the customer panel and relaunch with an aim of increasing breadth of viewpoints	2	Agree new name with the current panel members, develop and launch recruitment campaign. Consider EDI awareness and training for the panel	Director of housing	December 2023

Required outcome	Linked objective	Actions	By whom	Review deadline
8. Widen the scope of the service improvement committee to include direct customer feedback for each service area	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop new service reports which provide a holistic view of all customer feedback for the different business streams. ▶ Develop the service improvement tracker for visibility of action, and measuring success of service improvement work 	Director of housing	December 2023
9. Introduce service reports for our executive team and board, providing a multi-dimensional view of each service in relation to service standards	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop reports with board and executive team 	Director of housing	December 2023
10. Embed EDI into our employee voice forum, ensuring that our colleagues can contribute and input into the people and customer activities relating to our EDI strategy	1 & 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review the demographics of the employee voice forum and ensure it is reflective of our employee base ▶ Share EDI action plan with employee voice forum for feedback 	Head of people Director of housing	Ongoing
11. Review our cultural metrics as indicators of our progress against the commitments made	4	Engage with the data team to develop a central suite of metrics that provide an ongoing assessment of performance/ progress against our EDI priorities.	Director of housing Head of people Director of legal and governance	Ongoing <i>(With an annual review and adapt as we work through our plan)</i>

Required outcome	Linked objective	Actions	By whom	Review deadline
<p>12. Develop a plan on the stretch targets detailed in the NHF diversity report for HPG</p> <p>Meet our legal and moral obligations around the review of our gender and ethnicity pay gap – addressing barriers where identified</p> <p>Address the disability related gaps, understanding how we can further improve work in this area and develop a plan to address this</p>	<p>1 & 4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ +3% BAME, +3% Disability, 16-24 year old representation of 9% ▶ Develop reporting tool and evaluation against the NHF data ▶ Quarterly review with an annual report to executive team and board and publish via the government portal ▶ Review work activity around disability confident pledge and understanding where gaps exist, and improvements could be made ▶ Tools for monitoring and evaluating adjustments made to working environments and practices for our people ▶ Achieve a level 2 Disability Confident accreditation 	<p>Director of housing</p> <p>Head of people</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Year 2 - 2024

Required outcome	Linked objective	Actions	By whom	Review deadline
1. The housing management system holds our customer data including EDI in a safe and secure manner	2 & 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ensuring data integrity and that data be stored, reported, and updated ▶ Ensure that the data enables managers and boards to understand our customer profiles and to identify co-relations between customer characteristics and the experience and impressions of our services 	Director of housing	January 2024
2. Review and sign up to the Houseproud pledge. Review and sign up to the Social Housing Action Campaign (SHAC) disability charter	2	<p>Develop insight and understanding into the experiences of LGBTQ+ residents and customers, and develop training for staff around social inclusion, where gaps exist.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Complete participation form to join scheme ▶ Appoint Disability Visibility Group Liaison, who will be required to attend training twice a year. The first training session will be 30 days from joining the scheme ▶ Carry out a self-assessment against the SHAC disability charter to identify gaps <p>Develop an action plan to make group adjustments to ensure compliance within the three month turnaround time.</p>	Director of housing	January 2024

Required outcome	Linked objective	Actions	By whom	Review deadline
3. Build on the work in year 1 to improve the quality and accuracy of our workforce EDI data, to enable us to measure and monitor our progress towards our EDI cultural metrics	3 & 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Collect and update personal data from at least 95% of the workforce using a confidential and secure survey ▶ Analyse the data, identifying and addressing any data quality issues or gaps ▶ Develop a communications plan that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shares details of our ongoing work activity and progress against this strategy • Explains how sharing data is supporting us in addressing barriers that impact engagement • Helps to create a more inclusive work environment 	Head of people	January 2024
4. EDI is measured as an objective for all those in leadership positions and the rest of the workforce	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop an EDI objective to be included in April 2024 appraisal process for all those in leadership roles ▶ Develop a suite of EDI objectives for the rest of the business, who contribute to the delivery of this plan ▶ Develop a mechanism for reporting progress against these wider objectives. 	Head of people	January 2024
5. Raise standards further around recruitment and selection, ensuring our practices are fair and inclusive and we are reducing unconscious bias	1 & 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 100% of all hiring managers to have received the 'Hiring Talent' training, developing awareness of unconscious bias in the workplace, as well as standards to improve diversity through our hiring processes 	Head of people	August 2024
6. Ensure our marketing and communication practices are in line with our EDI commitments. Blended communications approach to improve inclusion for hard to reach workforce and customers	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review communication and marketing practices in line with our EDI commitments, to ensure blended communications to improve inclusion for our hard to reach workforce, customers and stakeholders. (Inclusion in being heard and represented) 	Head of marketing and communications	Ongoing

Year 3 - 2025

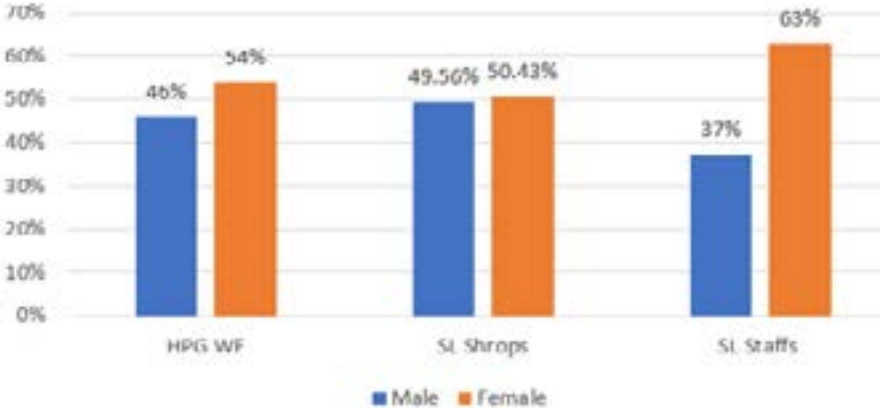
Required outcome	Linked objective	Actions	By whom	Review deadline
1. All service development has considered customer feedback from a variety of viewpoints and lived experiences	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Service improvements are driven by feedback and there is a wide suite of methods to gather feedback ▶ Review and report on those service improvements which have been altered as a result of customer feedback 	Director of housing	December 2025
2. A workforce with a greater understanding and knowledge of customer needs	2 & 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review and report on the business impact assessments and how they have shaped decision making ▶ Review and report on the contributions made through our employee voice forum to shape our priorities and improve outcomes for our customers 	Director of legal and governance Head of people Director of housing	December 2025
3. An inclusive culture	1 & 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review and report on internal moves – career growth, talent pools and opportunities available attached to EDI ▶ Review and report on opportunities for development attached to EDI ▶ Review and report on retention figures attached to EDI ▶ Review and report on the three year progress made with gender pay gap and ethnicity pay gap ▶ Review and report on the involvement of our employee voice forum to shape our EDI journey and their contributions ▶ Review and report on the training and development initiatives raising awareness and improving inclusivity across the workforce ▶ Review and report on progress within our engagement survey attached to our EDI profile ▶ Review and report on leadership development and training specifically around EDI ▶ Review and report on appraisal outcomes, specifically around EDI 	Head of people	December 2025

Required outcome	Linked objective	Actions	By whom	Review deadline
4. Achieve our accreditations set out in year one and year two and plan to build on that work	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Maintain and, where possible, build on the work undertaken to achieve our accreditations in year 1 and year 2 	Director of housing Head of people	December 2025

Appendix 1 – Workforce profile versus stock location data (regionally)

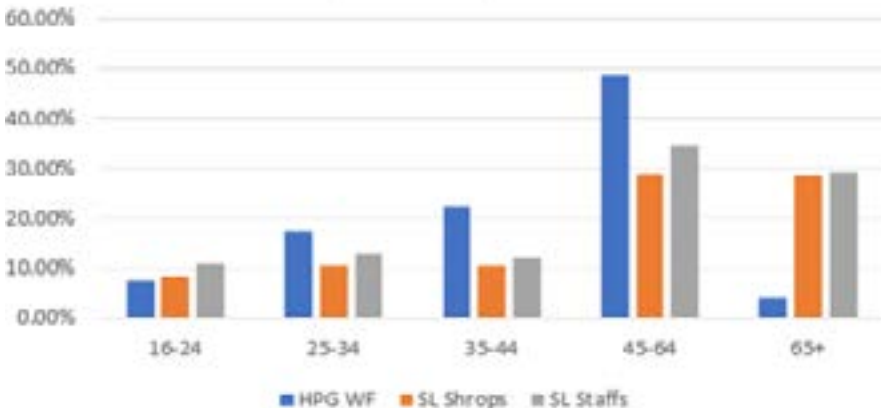
Gender

WF vs population by stock location



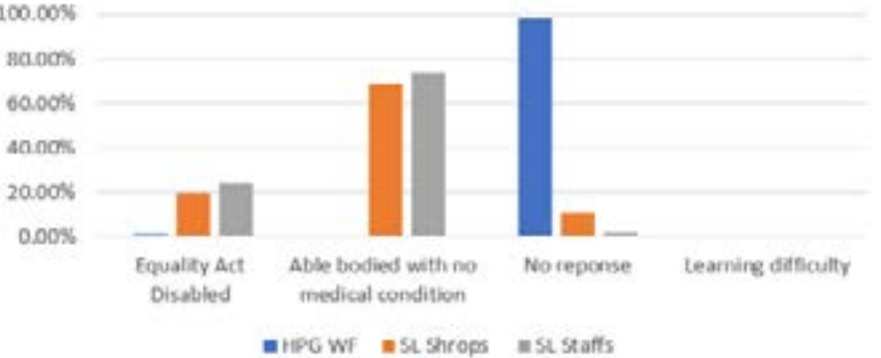
Age

WF vs population by stock location



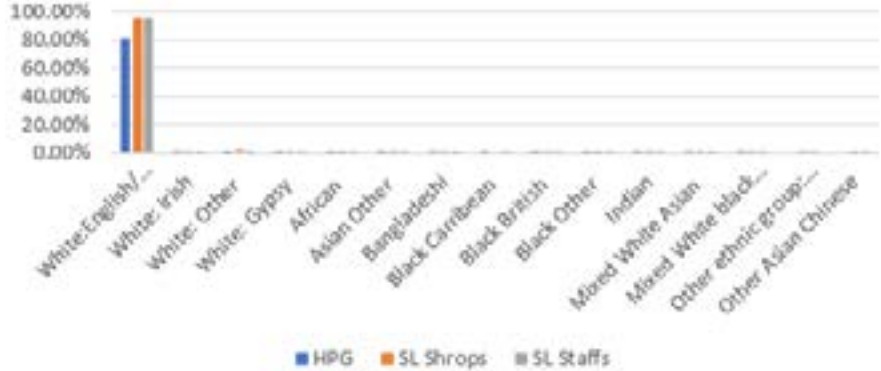
Disability

WF vs population by stock location



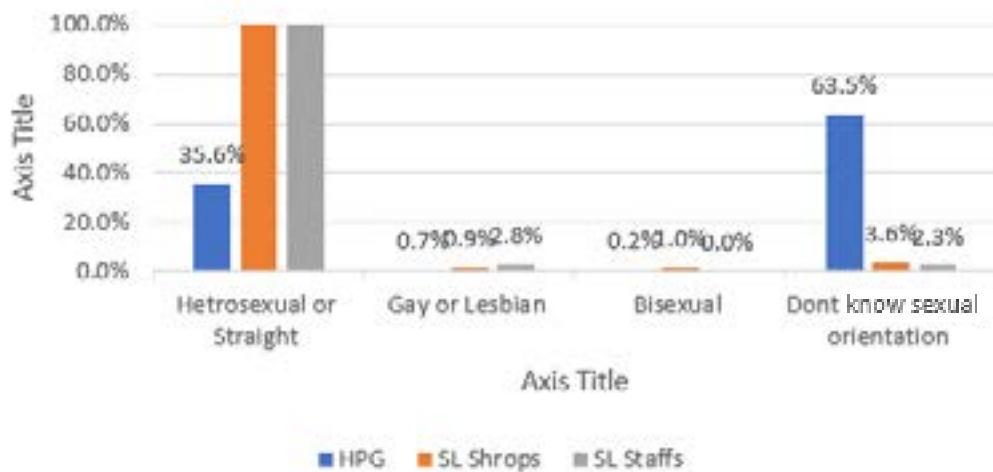
Ethnicity

WF vs population by stock location



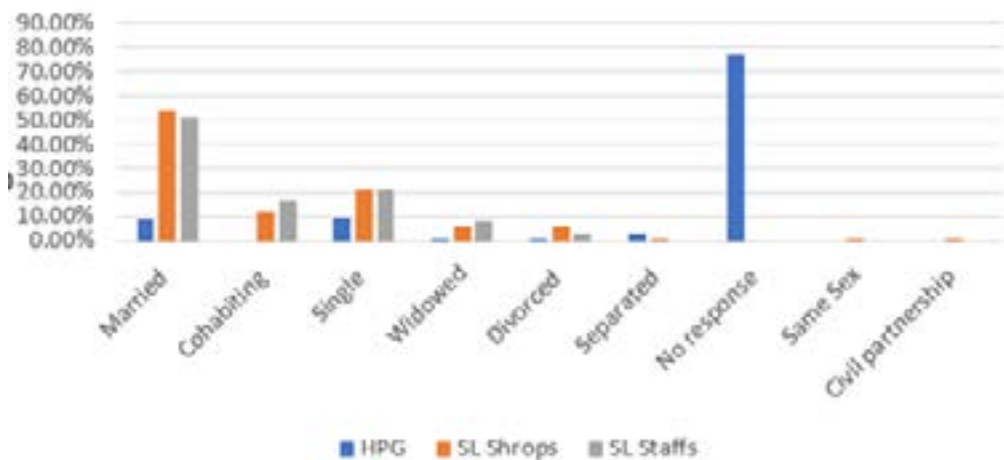
Sexuality

WF vs population by stock location



Marital status

WF vs population by stock location



Links to other strategies and useful references

[Housing Plus Group Corporate Plan 2022 – 2025](#)

[National Housing Federation: Code of Governance - 2020](#)

[Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development - 2022](#)

[Chartered Institute of Housing EDI Framework - 2022](#)

[HouseProud](#)

[National Housing Federation EDI tool - 2022](#)



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**Housing Plus Group
Corporate Plan 2022-25**

