Diversity Survey Benchmarking

Report 2023

Contents

Executive summary

The diversity survey is the UK's largest annual benchmarking exercise to collect and aggregate protected characteristics data for employees within the built environment. The size and trades of these organisations vary greatly, providing a large depth of insights into the diversity make-up of the built environment workforce, The survey is co-funded by National Highways, Network Rail, Transport for London and HS2. Other organisations join these four clients to gain access to further insights of their supply chains and to promote data reporting and therefore industry transparency.

The diversity survey was first established in 2016, transitioned to the Sustainability Tool in 2020 for streamline and cloud-based data management, enabling a much larger pool of respondents to participate. In 2023, RICS and Morgan Sindall also partook in this exercise to benchmark their supply chain.

The 2023 diversity survey results show a huge uptake in reporting, with 537 organisations reporting versus 270 last year. This resulted in 526,415 employee's protected characteristics data being anonymously aggregated to form the 2023 industry benchmarks. The benchmarks are used by the industry to see how it compares to the UK population. This enables areas for improvement to be identified, so initiatives and schemes can be tailored to target these areas where the industry is falling behind the UK population data. Organisations themselves use these benchmarks to assess how their organisation compares to both ONS and industry benchmark values. They can then identify areas they should focus on to improve and where they have made progress. The benchmarks are updated annually, so allows for year on year tracking of progress.

This year, the percentage of women saw an increase of 6% to 29.1%. This is the largest benchmark value reported for women since the initiative started in 2016. This is still far below the ONS' value of 50%, but is a huge leap in a positive direction. The increase is mainly coming from first time reporters this year and so the common organisational types with high percentage of women should be engaged with to see how they have achieved these numbers.

Other areas saw improvement on last year's data, such as the percentage of people with a disability and the percentage of people that are part of the LGBTQIA+ community. Although, both data sets have large gaps in the data with over 50% of these data sets being 'prefer not to say' or 'unknown' data. A focus for the 2024 reporting period should be reducing the unknown percentage for all categories, in particular for these two. By reducing the unknown values, the dataset will be more robust and therefore provide a more accurate insight into the representation of different groups.

The workforce has seen a shift towards a more youthful population with an increase in the under 25s and a decrease in the 50+ age groups. Although, attracting and retaining this young talent is still an area for focus as the percentage of under 25s is 7.7%, whereas the ONS working population figure is 12.8%. There has been an increase of young people post pandemic but not at the rate that was expected. There are distinct age profiles when it comes to gender. Women have a younger peak at the 25-44 age range which then decline steadily, whereas men have a dual peak with the later peak at the 50-59 range. When these are analyses alongside part time working and voluntary leavers it is clear to see that women are being lost around the time, they may be having children. The reasons they may not be retuning need to be engaged with and addressed to try and retain more women.

Ethnic minority group representation decreased by 0.1% to 13.6% which is below the ONS benchmark of 18.5%. Attracting ethnic minorities is not an issue as 52.5% of applicants were from ethnic minorities. The hiring of ethnic minority groups is where the issues lie as the ratio for an ethnic minority to be hired was 90:1, whereas for white the ratio was 28.4:1. It was between 1.6-6.4 times more difficult for different ethnic minority groups to be hired compared to their white counter parts. Further work needs to be done to tackle biases that occur at the shortlisting and hiring stages for ethnic minority groups.

The data set indicated that there were larger proportions of leavers for ethnic minority groups, employees part of the LGBTQIA+ community, employees with a religion or belief, and employees under the age of 25. All these groups have lower percentage that the ONS values and so are underrepresented in the industry before the leavers data is considered. The rates of loss within these groups need to be addressed, as efforts to attract this talent is not enough, nor impactful compared to other groups. Those that do join are then leaving at a higher rate than other groups. The destination of these leavers should also be explored further to see if they are leaving the industry or is they are moving within it. If these groups are leaving the industry all together, the reasons behind this should be explored to see if any issues that are raised can be addressed to prevent further loss of talent.

The overall objective of the survey is to encourage organisations to report their data to form industry benchmarks, which enables areas for improvement to be identified so that further work can be done to create an inclusive environment that is representative of the UK population. By the industry being more inclusive it will enable everyone to participate more equally, and so many difference voices and perspectives, due different lived experiences, can be heard. This will benefit the industry as new opportunities and skills will be developed, enhancing the products and services the built environment provides.

The data in this report highlights areas for improvement and suggest where efforts should be focused.

Background

Data was reported for all employees employed by organisations on the 1st January 2023, and captured data on all leavers between 1st January 2022 to the 31st December 2022.

Protected characteristics data points have been aggregated to form the Industry Benchmark for this year. These benchmarks can be used to assess what the industry looks like against ONS (Office of National Statistics – 2021 census data) data. Individual reporting organisations can also compare themselves to the industry benchmark and ONS data set values. This aids them in identifying areas in which they are doing well and areas to improve upon to move towards a more inclusive industry. It is also useful to look back on previous years to see how the benchmarks are changing. This can help inform whether certain schemes or activities to progress to more inclusive workplace have been impactful or not.

Overview

Our industry in 2023:

Sample size:

526,415 employees
versus 339,912 in 2022

537 companies
versus 270 in 2022

Data as on
1ˢᵗ January 2023

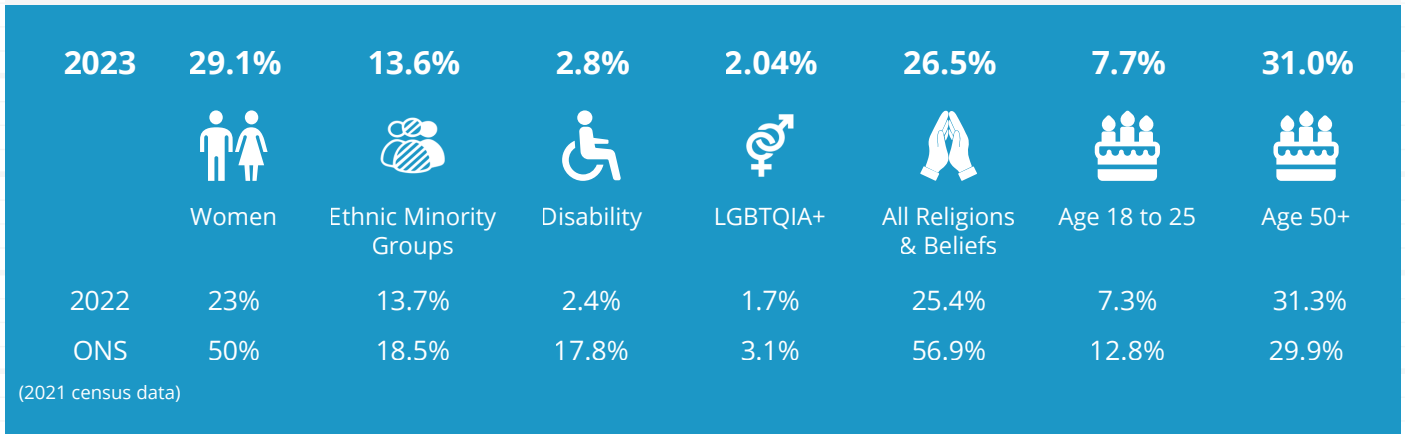|	Women	Ethnic Minority Groups	Disability	LGBTQIA+	All Religions & Beliefs	Age 18 to 25	Age 50+
2023	29.1%	13.6%	2.8%	2.04%	26.5%	7.7%	31.0%
2022	23%	13.7%	2.4%	1.7%	25.4%	7.3%	31.3%
ONS (2021 census data)	50%	18.5%	17.8%	3.1%	56.9%	12.8%	29.9%

Figure 1: protected characteristics summary for 2023, 2022 and ONS data.

The 2023 data set is made up of data from 537 organisations, covering 526,415 employees. This is an increase on last year's 270 organisations and 339,912 employees (see figure 1).

This year there was a jump in the percentage of women employed in the industry from 23% to 29.1%. The industry had been consistently sitting at 23% for a few years and this increase indicates change as increasing the proportion of women has been a longstanding target. This increase has showed a shift in the right direction towards the ONS' value of 50%.

The percentage of ethnicity minority groups employees has decrease by 0.1%. This is not a significant dip overall but when we look at the data more granularly, we can see that the percentage values for the three tiers differs dramatically (see the Ethnicity section for further information).

The percentage of people who stated they have a disability has increased by 0.4%, along with the number of organisations that collect this data. The percentage of organisations with unknown data this year for disability decreased by 9% which is positive as this increases the robustness of the data set and implies that organisations see the value in collecting and reporting disability data.

The percentage of employees that identify as being part of the LGBTQIA+ community has also increased from 1.7 to 2.04%. This value is still behind the ONS' value of 3.1% but there is movement in the right direction. This year asexual, pansexual, and queer options were added to mirror the census' data points.

The percentage of people with a religion or belief increased by 0.9%. This percentage remains far below the ONS' value of 56.9%. This is partly due to data collection being poor, with 56% of the data set is unknown data due to employers not collecting this information.

The age profile this year is younger than that of last year due to the increase in people under 25 and the decrease in the % of people over 50. The shift is small, but it hints to attracting young talent which has been an ongoing focus.
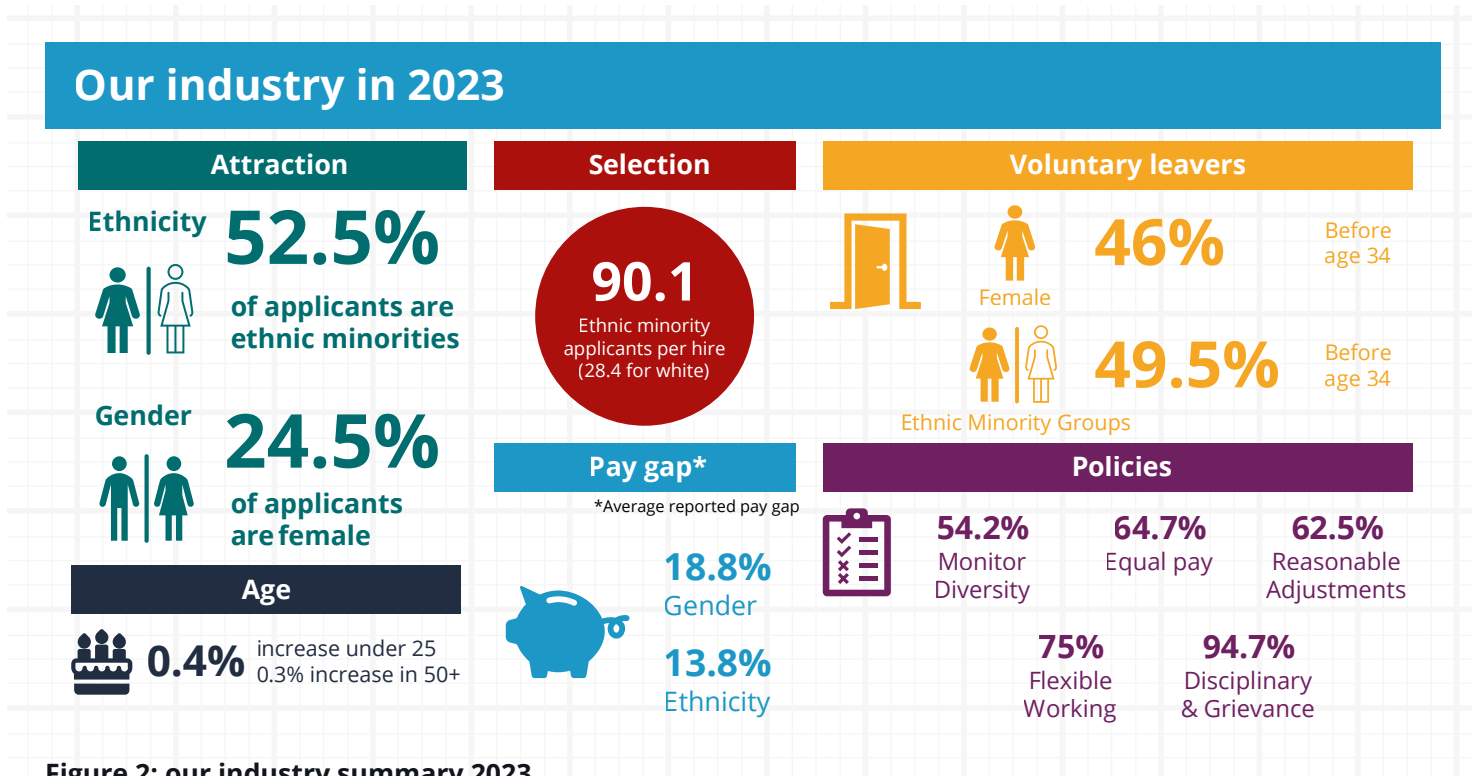
Our industry in 2023

Attraction

Ethnicity

52.5% of applicants are ethnic minorities

Gender

24.5% of applicants are female

Age

0.4% increase under 25
0.3% increase in 50+

Selection

90.1 Ethnic minority applicants per hire (28.4 for white)

Pay gap*
*Average reported pay gap

18.8% Gender

13.8% Ethnicity

Voluntary leavers

46% Female — Before age 34

49.5% Ethnic Minority Groups — Before age 34

Policies

54.2% Monitor Diversity

64.7% Equal pay

62.5% Reasonable Adjustments

75% Flexible Working

94.7% Disciplinary & Grievance

Figure 2: our industry summary 2023

The survey collects data beyond employee protected characteristics; it collects data on pay gap, attraction and recruitment trends, policies, and leavers. This enables further trends to be identified and indicates engagement beyond gathering employees' personal data.

This year, 52.5% of the applicants came from ethnic minority groups, and almost 25% were women. This high percentage of ethnic minority groups is not translating into their hiring, as the ratio of ethnic minority applicants hired is 90.1:1 vs 28.4:1 for white applicants. This ratio increased from 50:1 last year, suggesting that it is becoming more difficult to enter the workforce for ethnic minority groups (figure 2).

We also see that for this same group, almost 50% leave before the age of 34, indicating that the talent that is in the industry may be being lost (figure 2). This is the same for women, as 46% leave before the age of 34. The reasons for these large values from these two groups should be explored further to try and address any causes for this loss of talent.

In terms of pay gap, the gender pay gap has decreased by 2% from last year, to 18.8%, and the ethnicity pay gap has increased from 8.3 to 13.8%. The industry is still far behind the UK average pay gap and the goal to have no pay gap.

This year we had a decrease in the percentages of organisations with polices for all eight that we collect data on. The largest drop was for flexible working at 9% and the smallest decrease was equal pay with 0.5%. There as some variation between the tiers when it came to policies, which is explored in the pay gap section of this report. The areas that need focusing on increasing are reasonable adjustments, equal pay, and monitoring diversity.

Respondent trends

537 organisations reported their data in 2023 covering 526,415 employees. This is an increase on last year's 270 organisations and 339,912 employees.

There was a large influx of small and medium organisations (SMEs) in 2023. 382 SMEs reported in 2023, up from 182 in 2022 (figure 3).

Reports:

Reporters could either submit 'Full' or 'Lite' reports. The Full report includes line by line protected characteristics data which links the characteristics. For example, a woman, aged 34, Muslim and non-disabled etc. The Lite version involved submitting organisation-wide statistics only e.g. 25 women, 52 men, 2 non-binary/non-conforming employees. 248 organisations reported Full reports this year. 23 organisations reported that they do not collect any diversity data in 2023. This equates to only 4% of reporting organisations.

537
Organisations

526k
Employees

382
SME's

44%
Tier 2

248
Full reports

Figure 3: submission figures

Tiers

Data was reported by Tier 1, 2 and 3 organisations (table 1). Tier 1 organisations are contracted directly to a client organisation. Tier 2 are subcontracted to a Tier 1 supplier to provides or services indirectly to client organisations. Tier 3 are subcontracted to a Tier 2 supplier to provides or services indirectly to client organisations. The client organisations for 2023 were Transport for London, HS2, National Highways and Network Rail.

Number of submissions			
	2021	2022	2023
Tier 1	60	142	282
Tier 2	24	126	221
Tier 3	n/a	7	34

Table 1: tier submissions
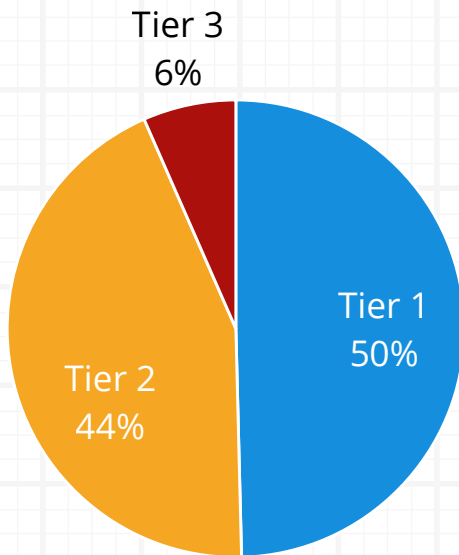
2023 Submission Response

Figure 4: tier submission

In 2023 44% of the 2023 data came from Tier 2, 50% from Tier 1 and 6% from Tier 3. There was a similar split in 2022 with 46% from Tier 2, 52% Tier 1 and 2% Tier 3 (figure 4).

This translates into 87% of the employees reported coming from Tier 1, 12% from tier 2 and 1% from Tier 3. Tier 2 and 3 organisations are typically SMEs and therefore have fewer employees and so make up less of the data set.

Contractors and consultants

Data was reported by contractors, consultants, and other organisations. This year, 71% came from contractors, down from last year's 76%. Consultants made up 10% of the data set in both 2022 and 2023. Other has therefore increased from 14% to 19% in 2023 (figure 5).

The data that came from contractors made up 45% of the employees reported, consultants made up 25% and other 30%. There was a similar split to last year. This shows that although other and consultants make up the smaller portion of the types of organisations reporting their data makes up the majority of the data captured.
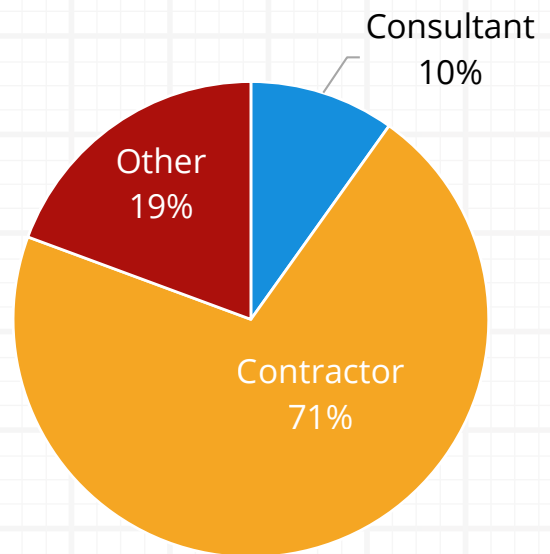
2023 Response %

Figure 5: contractor, consultant, or other submission

Policies

Data on eight policies was collected this year. Organisations are asked whether they have these policies in place but were not asked to provide evidence. Overall, there was a decrease across the board in the percentage of organisations that have policies. The largest decrease was for Reasonable adjustments by 11.3% and the smallest decreased was for equal pay at 0.5% (figure 6). It is a legal requirement for organisations to provide reasonable adjustments for their employees so this policy should be 100% in theory.
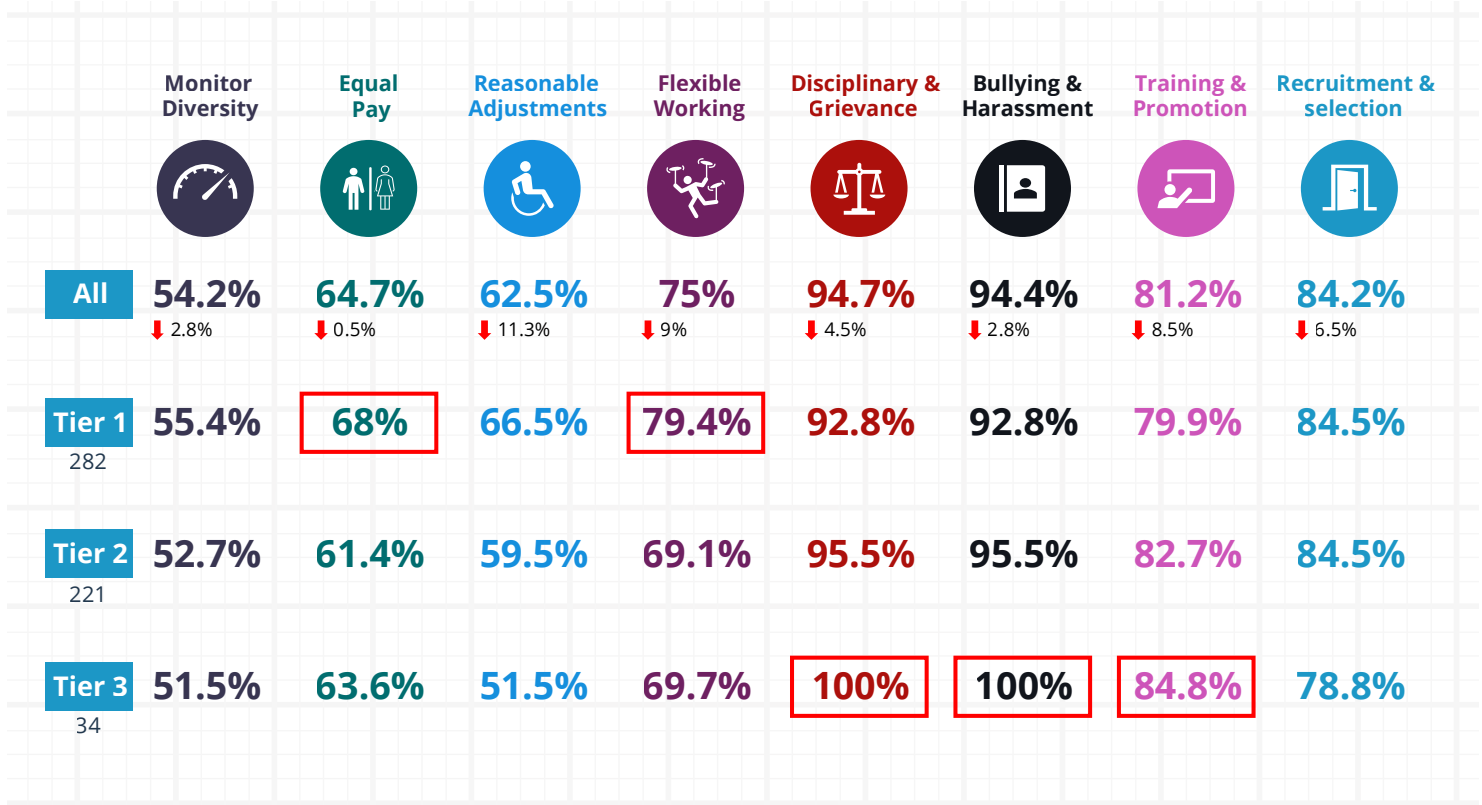
	Monitor Diversity	Equal Pay	Reasonable Adjustments	Flexible Working	Disciplinary & Grievance	Bullying & Harassment	Training & Promotion	Recruitment & selection
All	**54.2%** ↓ 2.8%	**64.7%** ↓ 0.5%	**62.5%** ↓ 11.3%	**75%** ↓ 9%	**94.7%** ↓ 4.5%	**94.4%** ↓ 2.8%	**81.2%** ↓ 8.5%	**84.2%** ↓ 6.5%
Tier 1 282	**55.4%**	**68%**	**66.5%**	**79.4%**	**92.8%**	**92.8%**	**79.9%**	**84.5%**
Tier 2 221	**52.7%**	**61.4%**	**59.5%**	**69.1%**	**95.5%**	**95.5%**	**82.7%**	**84.5%**
Tier 3 34	**51.5%**	**63.6%**	**51.5%**	**69.7%**	**100%**	**100%**	**84.8%**	**78.8%**

Figure 6: presence of policies broken down by tier.

It is clear to see that there is a large amount of variation between the tiers (figure 6). With tier 1 having the largest percentages in most area, but tier 3 performs the best when it comes to Disciplinary and Grievance, Bullying and Harassment and Training and Promotion. Tier 2 sits between the other tiers for all the policy types. From this data we can see that we need to support all tiers to ensure they have these policies in place and increase these percentages.

Pay gap

Data was collected for gender, ethnicity and disability pay gap. Pay gap is calculated as the difference between average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of once group against another e.g. men and women. The pay gap for women is presented as the proportion of men's average hourly earnings (excluding overtime). The gender pay gap was 18.8% in 2023 meaning that women on average were paid 18.8% less than men (figure 7). The UK's gender pay gap figure is 9.4% and so for our data set the pay gap is worse for women. It is a legal requirement for organisations with over 250 employees to calculate and report their gender pay gap to the UK government. 155 organisations should have reported their gender pay gap into the survey, but in reality, this number was just 64.
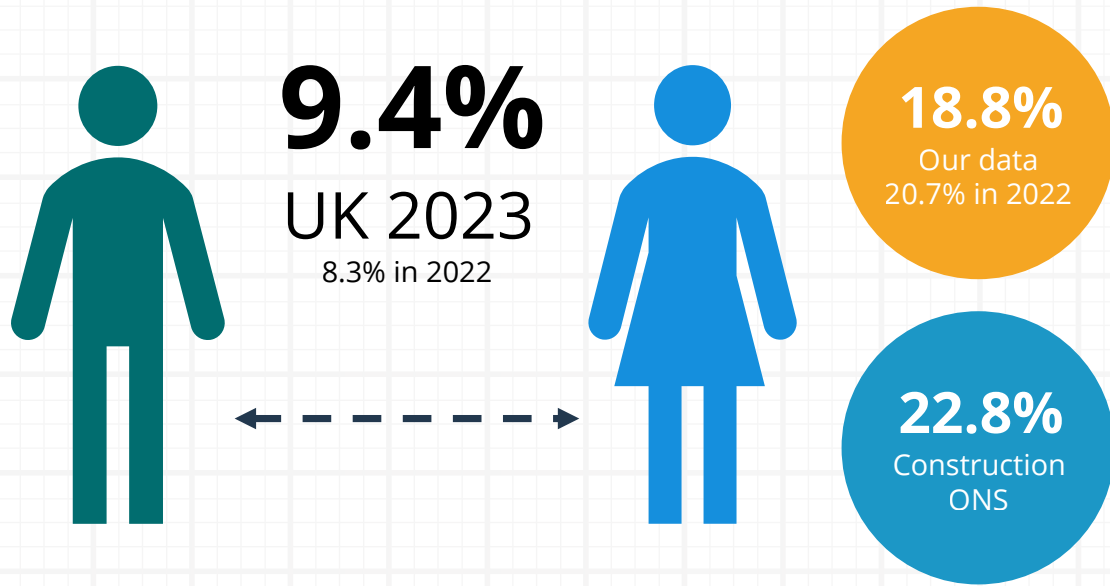
9.4%
UK 2023
8.3% in 2022

18.8%
Our data
20.7% in 2022

22.8%
Construction
ONS

Figure 7: gender pay gap.

ONS Job type	Women earn x% less
Assemblers & operatives n.e.c.	14.50%
Building finishing trades	17.60%
Building & civil engineering technicians	1.90%
Carpenters & joiners	1.30%
Civil engineers	0.60%
Construction operatives	13.70%
Construction & building trades	6.70%
Construction & building supervisors	17.90%
Construction & building n.e.c.	19.50%
Construction professionals	4.50%
Electricians & electrical fitters	18.40%
Engineering project managers	2.10%
Engineering technicians	14%
Plant & machines operatives n.e.c.	8%

Alongside the 64 organisations that reported their pay gap 163 said there intend to collect this data, and 307 said they do not intend to collect this data (figure 8). This figure is even larger for disability and ethnicity pay gap. The ethnicity and disability pay gap data reported was from 15 and 5 organisations respectively. These data sets are very small and provide a limited picture of the industry. Moving forward organisations need to be encourages to 1. understand why this data is valuable and aids transparency to see how inclusive (or not) an organisation and industry is, 2. collect this data, 3. report this data to enable benchmarks to be set to allow for comparison.
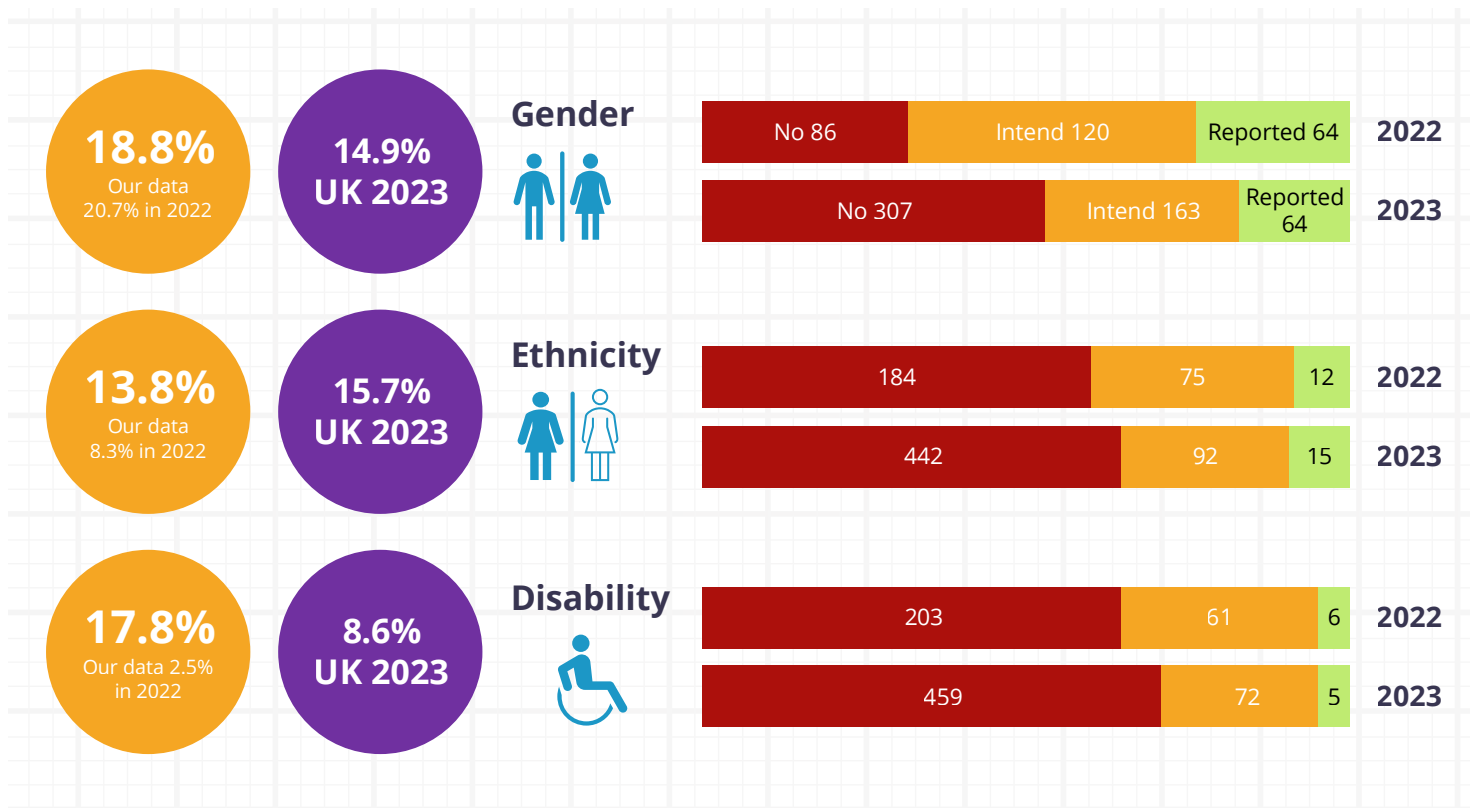
Gender

18.8% Our data 20.7% in 2022	**14.9% UK 2023**	

No 86	Intend 120	Reported 64	**2022**
No 307	Intend 163	Reported 64	**2023**

Ethnicity

13.8% Our data 8.3% in 2022	**15.7% UK 2023**	

184	75	12	**2022**
442	92	15	**2023**

Disability

17.8% Our data 2.5% in 2022	**8.6% UK 2023**	

203	61	6	**2022**
459	72	5	**2023**

Figure 8: gender, ethnicity and disability pay gap 2023 and 2022.

Explore the Fairness, Inclusion & Respect (FIR) Programme's free resources:

THE GENDER PAY GAP EXPLAINED

HOW IS CONSTRUCTION DEALING WITH GENDER PAY GAP?

THE ETHNICITY PAY GAP TIMEBOMB

REDUCING THE GENDER PAY GAP

Gender

Gender has been a focus since the survey's conception. The focus has been on increasing the percentage of women that are employed in the industry. The percentage of women has been consistently sat around the 23-24% mark since 2016. This year we saw the values jump up to 29.1%; the highest value that has been reported since the data collection started in 2016. Where this jump may have come from is explored in this section. This 29.1% is still much lower than the ONS' value of 50% and so, although the percentage has increased, there still is room for improvement (figure 9).
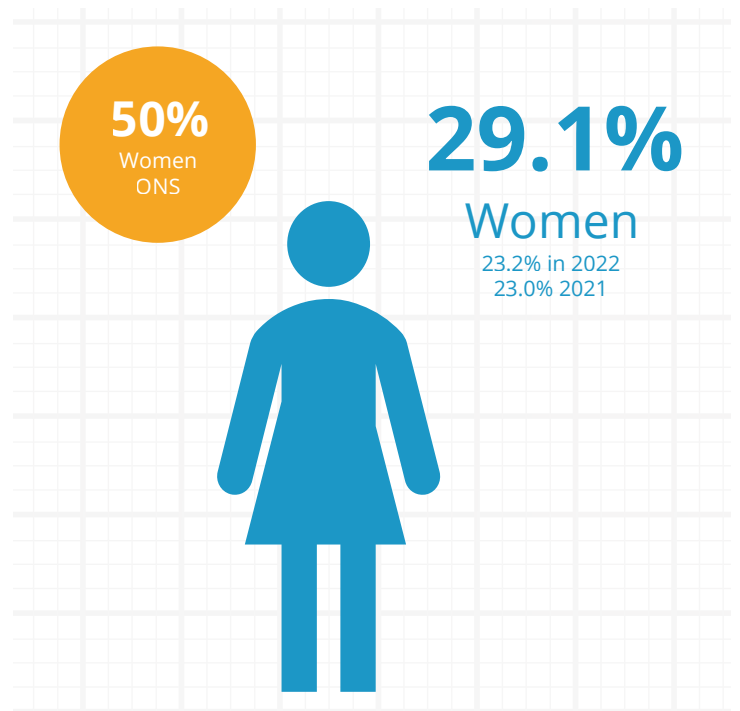
50%
Women
ONS

29.1%
Women
23.2% in 2022
23.0% 2021

Figure 9: percentage of women 2021-2023

Year-on-year

In the last two years there has been a low percentage of unknowns introduced to the data set (figure 10). Due to the increased amount of reporting organisations, this is to be expected, but the aim is to reduce these back to zero, as gender and age are collected by most HR departments. The percentage split of women and men has not varied considerably until this year. The representation of non-binary/non-conforming people was 0.024% this year.
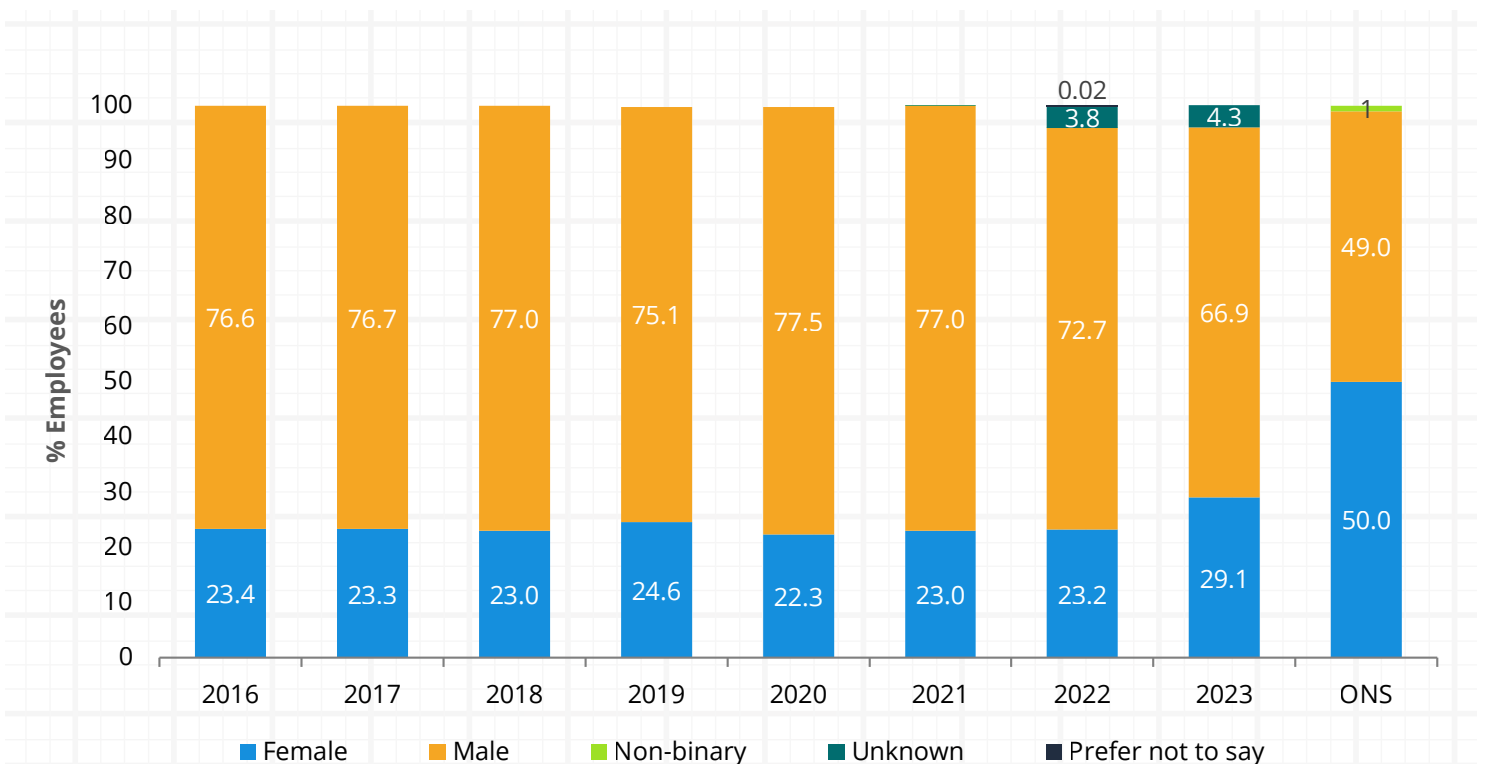

Figure 10: gender data 2016-2023

Tiers

When the data is filtered by tier, it is clear to see that the overall increase in the percentage of women is coming from tier 1 organisations, with an average of 33.0% (figure 11). The percentage then sharply drops for tier 2 and 3 to 18.9% and 16.3% respectively. Both tier 2 and 3 have seen decreases on last year's percentages. Tier 3 had a very small sample size in 2022, with only seven organisations reporting data, and so this year's figure is a more accurate picture of tier 3, with 33 organisations reporting data. These low percentages for tier 2 and 3 should be a focus moving forward.
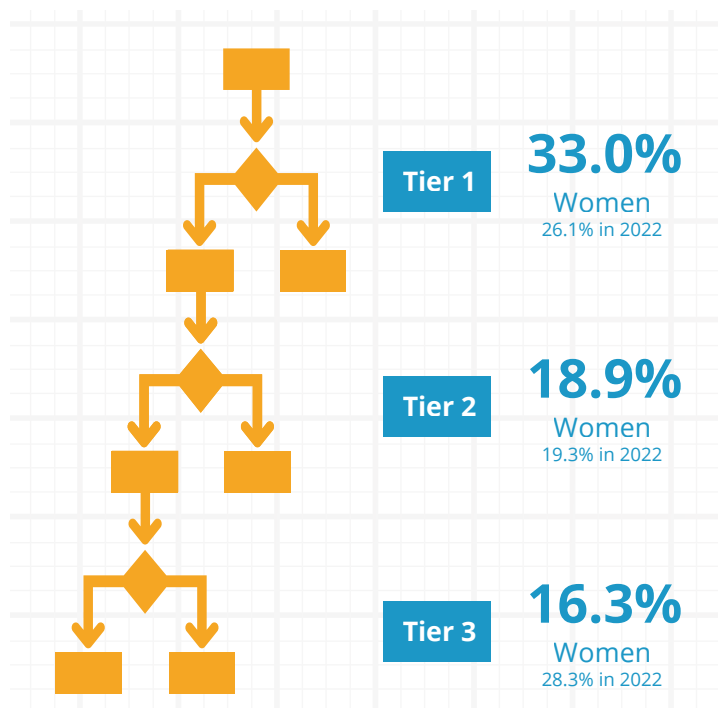

Tier 1

33.0%
Women
26.1% in 2022

Tier 2

18.9%
Women
19.3% in 2022

Tier 3

16.3%
Women
28.3% in 2022

Figure 11: percentage of women for each tier

2022

23.2%
Women
(Industry Benchmark)

Tier 1 overall — **26.1%** Women

Repeat reporting — **21.6%** Women

68 organisations

2023

29.1%
Women
(Industry Benchmark)

Tier 1 overall — **33.0%** Women

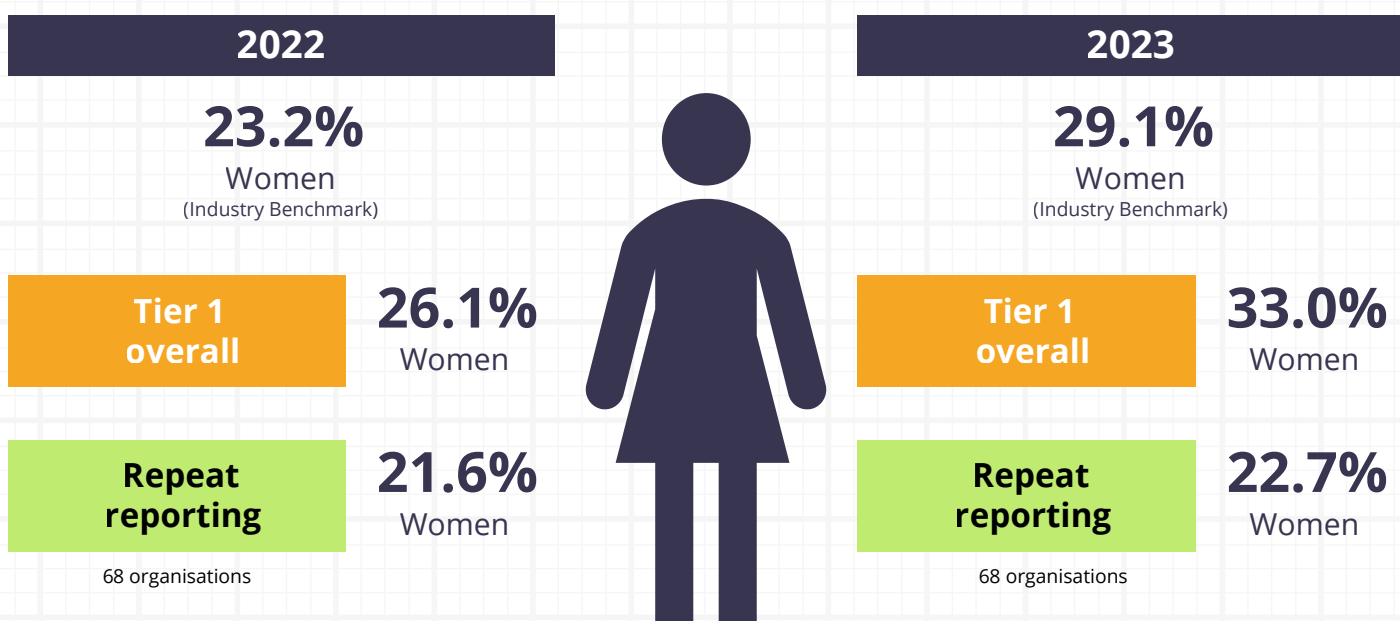**Repeat reporting** — **22.7%** Women

68 organisations

Figure 12: tier 1 breakdown of women for 2022 and 2023

Tier 1

Tier 1's overall percentage in 2022 was 26.1% and so has increased by 3%. When diving deeper into the data, looking at the 68 organisations that reported for both 2022 and 2023, it is clear to see that the percentages for women have not increased dramatically as there was only a 0.9% rise (figure 12). Out of these 68 organisations, 23 of them reported values above the industry benchmark in 2022. In 2023 this dropped to only 19 values being above the industry benchmark. This indicates that the increase in the percentage of women in the industry is coming from organisations that have reported for the first time this year. Out of these new reporters, 54 have percentages over the benchmark value for 2023.

However, many of the organisations that have self-declared themselves as tier 1 would be classified as tier 2 according to the clients, and in 2024 the definitions will be reassessed to increase the likelihood that the correct tier options are being selected.

It would be useful to engage with the tier 1 organisations that reported for the first time this year to explore whether they have had schemes in place to attract women to their organisations or whether these high percentages have occurred organically. Other organisations could learn from any impactful schemes these organisations may have. If the high proportion of women is organic, this should also be interrogated further in terms of why women are attracted to these organisations. Is it because of their workplace culture, do they have certain policies in place such as flexible working or parental leave, for example?

Sectors

Data was collected from 16 sectors this year. Rail, facilities management, and central government are leading the way, with percentages above the industry benchmark as shown in green (figure 13). The sectors in orange show the sectors with values above the 2022 industry benchmark but are below 2023's years value. The sectors in blue are below this year's and last year's benchmark values for women.
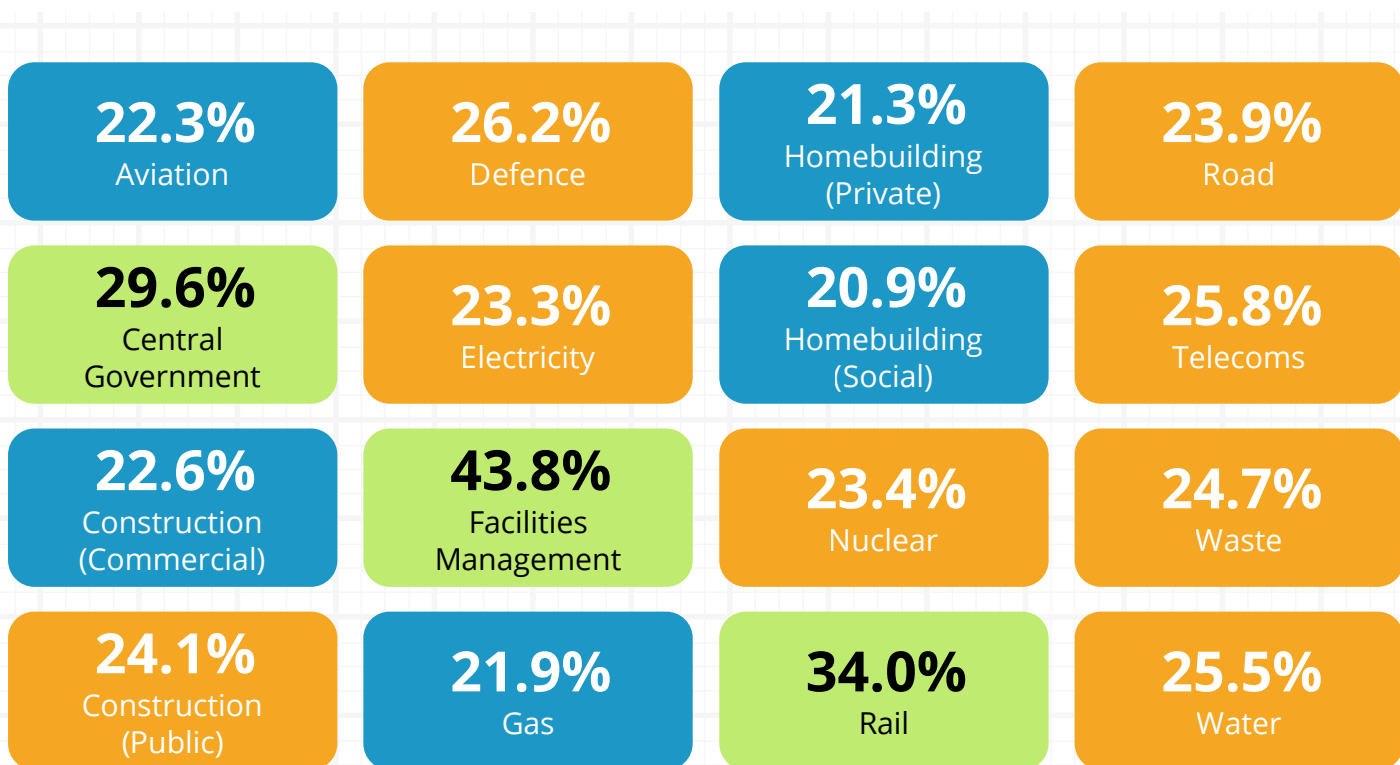
22.3% Aviation	**26.2%** Defence	**21.3%** Homebuilding (Private)	**23.9%** Road
29.6% Central Government	**23.3%** Electricity	**20.9%** Homebuilding (Social)	**25.8%** Telecoms
22.6% Construction (Commercial)	**43.8%** Facilities Management	**23.4%** Nuclear	**24.7%** Waste
24.1% Construction (Public)	**21.9%** Gas	**34.0%** Rail	**25.5%** Water

Figure 13: sector breakdown of women 2023

Rail, facilities management, and central government should be engaged with to see how they achieve these percentages. It would be useful to identify the types of roles that the women in these sectors have, to gain insight on any trends or themes.

SMEs

Women make up a much smaller percentage of the workforce in SMEs (22.2%) compared to larger organisations (29.8%) (figure 14). However, more SMEs have values above the industry benchmark (90) and the highest percentage reported (89.3%). The larger organisations have a larger weighting compared to SMEs, which pulls the overall percentage up. The SMEs data set covers 24,163 employees, whereas larger organisations make up 502,202 employees. It is great to see that there are many SMEs outperforming the industry benchmark.
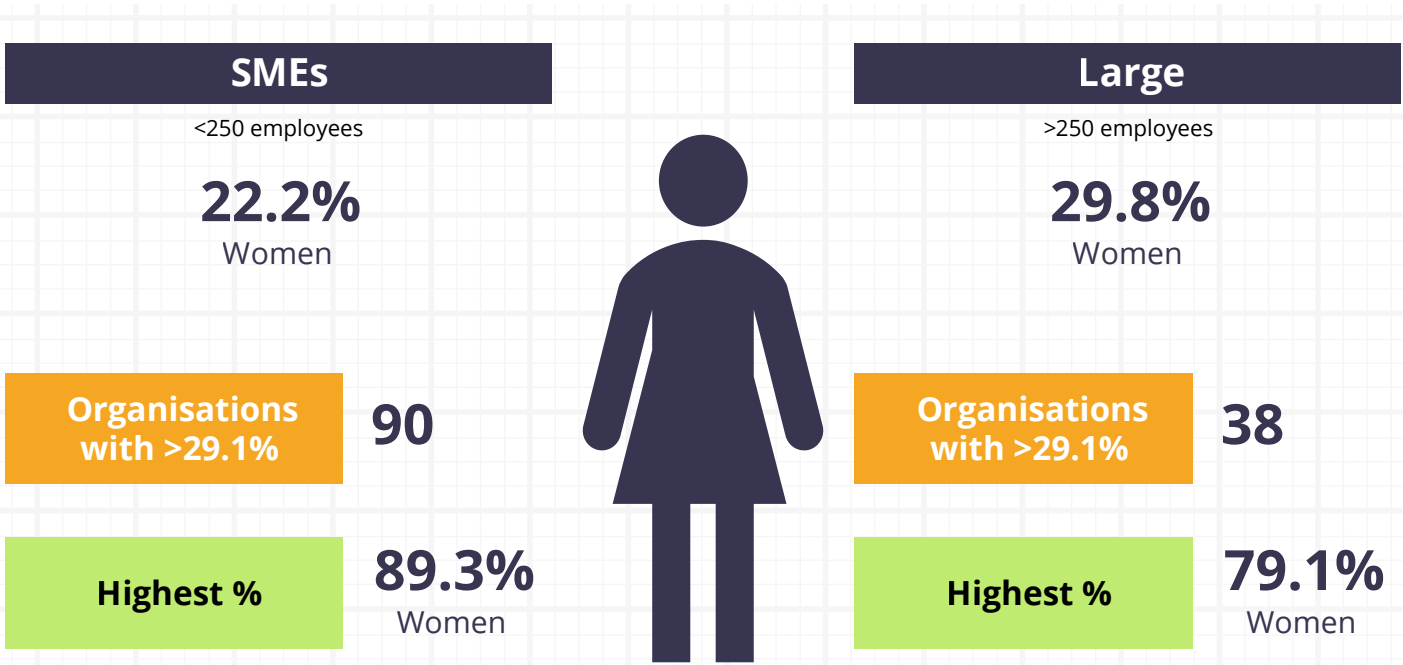
SMEs	Large
<250 employees	>250 employees
22.2% Women	**29.8%** Women
Organisations with >29.1% — 90	Organisations with >29.1% — 38
Highest % — **89.3%** Women	Highest % — **79.1%** Women

Figure 14: SME and larger organisations percentages of women 2023

Sectors

When looking at the percentage of women in terms of SME sectors, we can see that facilities management and homebuilding (social and private) are leading the way with percentages above the 2023 industry benchmark. Nuclear, rail and defence have percentages above the SME benchmark value, but below the industry benchmark.
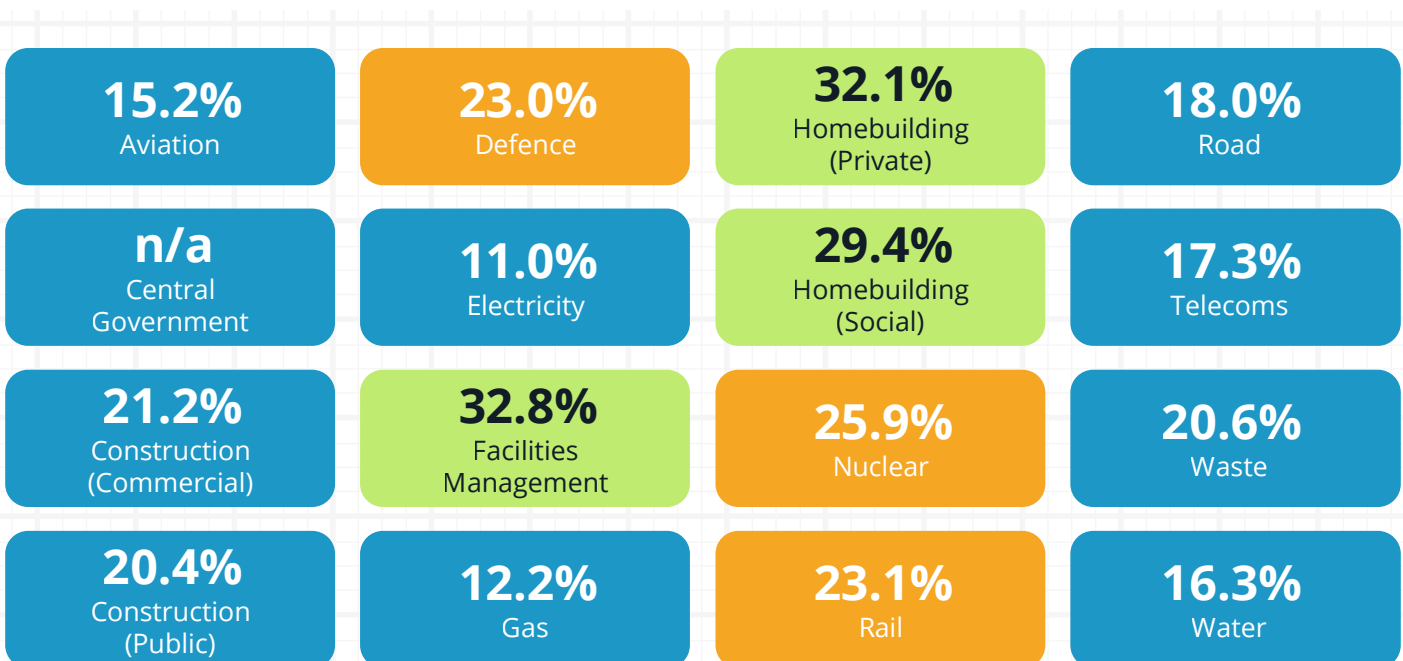
15.2% Aviation	**23.0%** Defence	**32.1%** Homebuilding (Private)	**18.0%** Road
n/a Central Government	**11.0%** Electricity	**29.4%** Homebuilding (Social)	**17.3%** Telecoms
21.2% Construction (Commercial)	**32.8%** Facilities Management	**25.9%** Nuclear	**20.6%** Waste
20.4% Construction (Public)	**12.2%** Gas	**23.1%** Rail	**16.3%** Water

Figure 15: SME and larger organisations percentages of women 2023

These percentages are also above the 2022 industry benchmark value, showing a positive shift in these sectors as well. The blue shows the values below the SME and industry benchmark values. These are the sectors that we should focus our efforts on and engage them further, such as electricity and gas, which are falling far behind the other sectors with extremely low percentage.

When it comes to the type of organisations that have percentages over industry benchmark for SMEs, many of these organisations were in recruitment, manufacturing, signage and training (figure 16). These four are less site based than some of the other SME organisations that reported such as construction companies, fit out and retro fit to name a few.
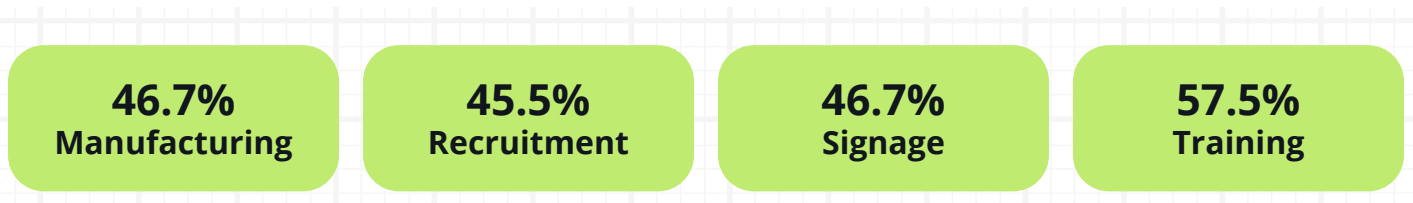
| **46.7%** | **45.5%** | **46.7%** | **57.5%** |
| Manufacturing | Recruitment | Signage | Training |

Figure 16: organisation types with percentages over the 2023 industry benchmark for women.

Others that were present that typically attract larger percentages of women were cleaning, consultancy, and strategy organisations.

We should engage with these types of organisations and sectors to see if they have had any schemes or best practice in place that have helped them achieve these percentages, which could be shared with other organisations.

Explore the FIR Programme's free resources:

GENDER STEREOTYPING IN APPRENTICESHIPS

EQUALITY AT WORK - YOUNG WOMEN'S TRUST

10 WAYS TO STEP UP AS AN ALLY TO NON-BINARY PEOPLE

Age

The age profile of the industry had seen a slight shift towards a more youthful population compared to previous years. 7.7% of the workforce was under 25, which is up 0.9% on last year's value. 31% are over 50 which is down 3% on last year's data (figure 17, 18 and table 2). The industry has more weighting than the ONS working age population for the 30 to 59 age group and so, has a smaller percentage of under 29s and over 60s than the ONS working age. This indicates that the industry needs to focus on attracting younger talent to avoid workforce shortages in the future.
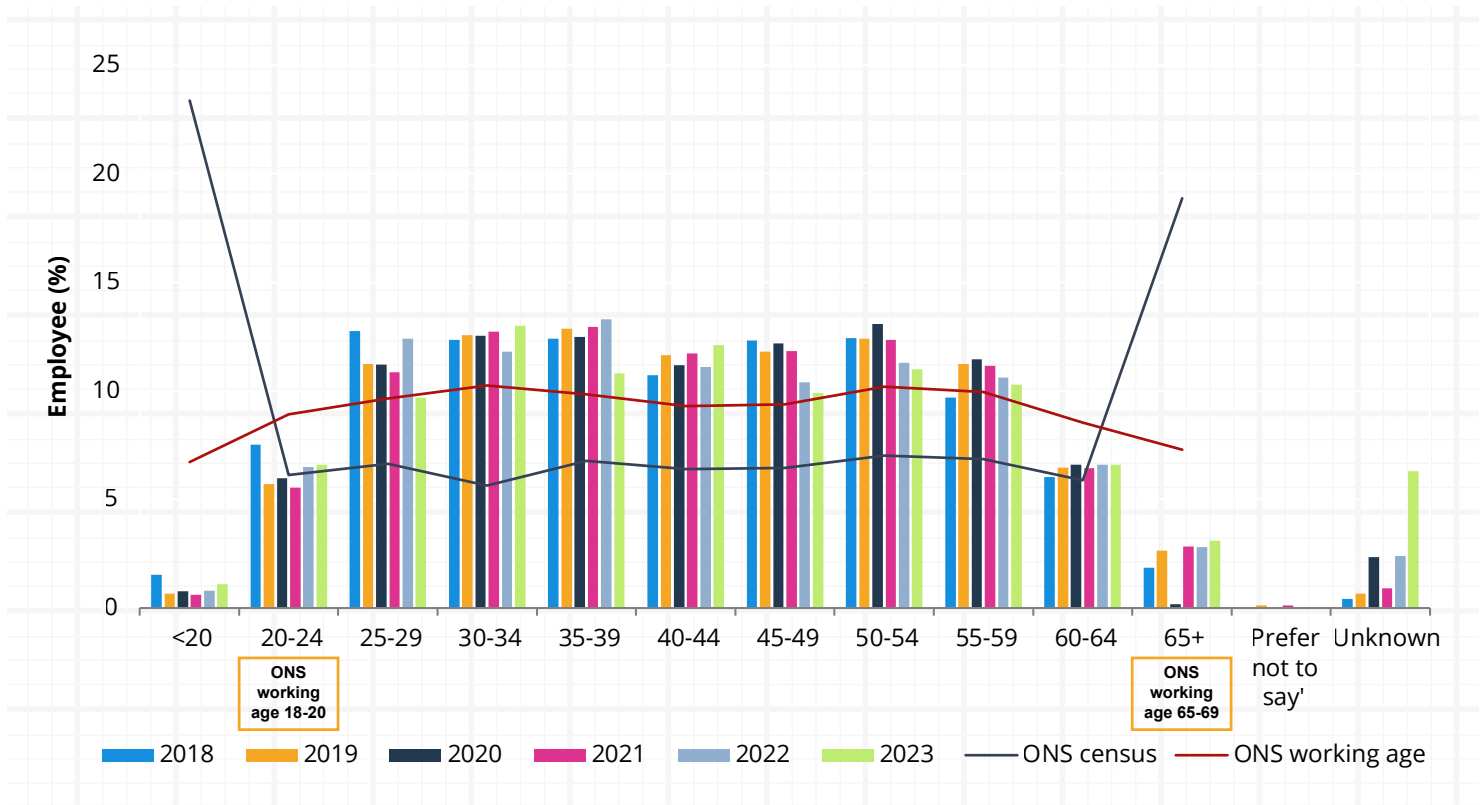
Figure 17: age profile 2018-2023.

Age	% of employees						ONS working age
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Under 20	1.5	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.7	1.1	6.7
Between 20-24	7.5	5.7	6.0	5.5	6.5	6.6	8.9
Between 25-29	12.7	11.2	11.2	10.9	12.4	9.7	9.6
Between 30-34	12.4	12.6	12.5	12.7	11.7	13.0	10.3
Between 35-39	12.4	12.9	12.5	12.9	13.2	10.8	9.8
Between 40-44	10.7	11.7	11.2	11.7	11.0	12.1	9.3
Between 45-49	12.3	11.8	12.2	11.8	10.3	9.9	9.4
Between 50-54	12.4	12.4	13.1	12.4	11.2	11.0	10.2
Between 55-59	9.7	11.2	11.5	11.2	10.5	10.3	10.0
Between 60-64	6.0	6.5	6.6	6.4	6.5	6.6	8.5
Over 65	1.8	2.6	0.2	2.8	2.8	3.1	7.3
Prefer not to say'	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	
Unknown	0.4	0.7	2.3	0.9	3.1	6.3	

Table 2: age profile percentages 2018-2023.

2022

2023

**7.7%
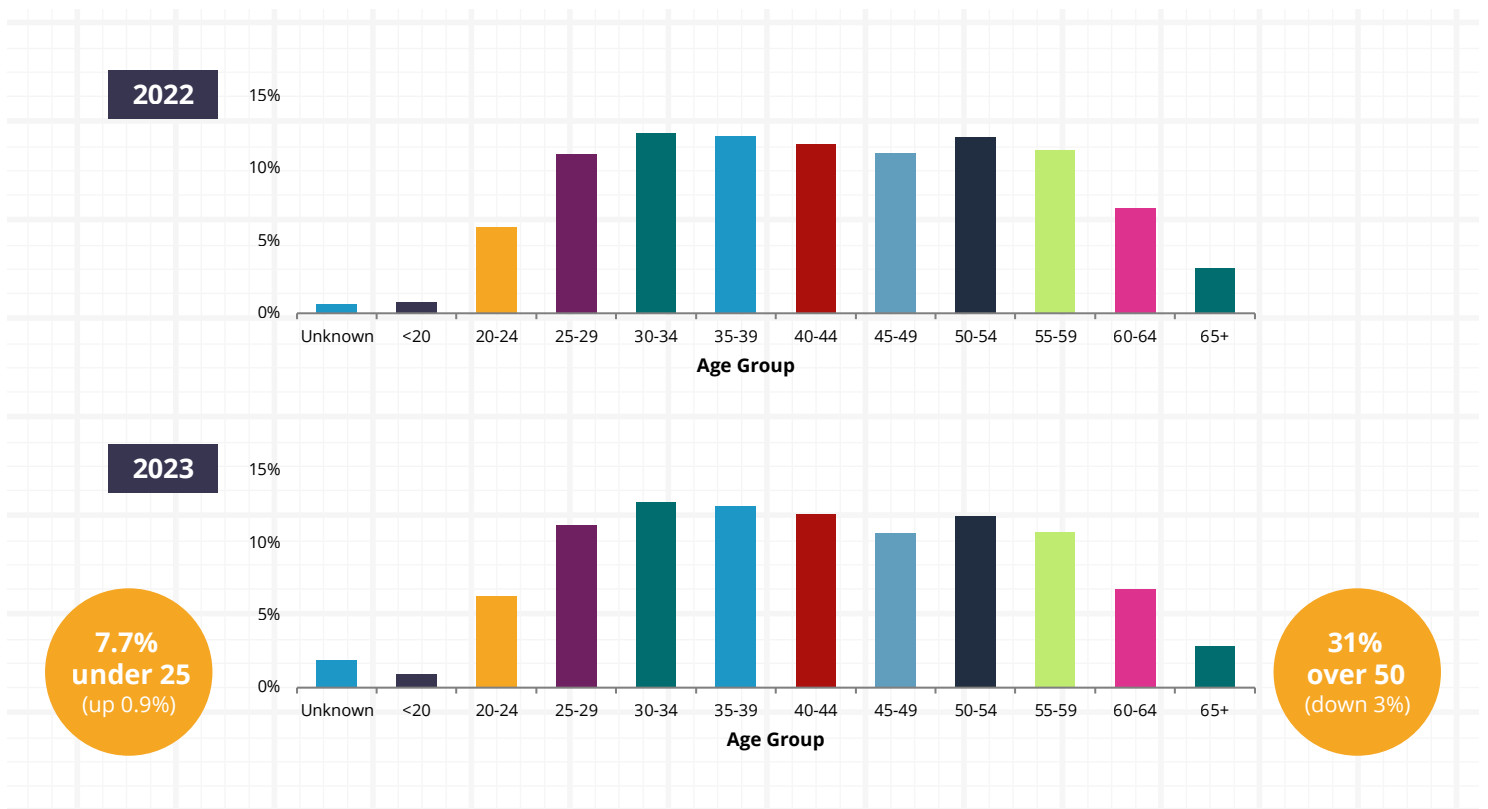under 25**
(up 0.9%)

**31%
over 50**
(down 3%)

Figure 18: age profile 2022 and 2023.

Gender

The age profiles for men and women differ but similar trends appear for 2022 and 2023. The sample size for non-binary/non-conforming people is too small to be used for comparison as they made up only 0.024% of the dataset. Overall, there is no significant year on year change for the age profile overall (figure 18) or for the men's and women's splits (figure 19).

The age profile for men has not changed from 2022 to 2023 (figure 19). The men's data has a double peak around 30-39 & larger peak at 50-59 for both years. The women's age profile also has not significantly varied between 2022 and 2023. The women's peak however is much earlier than the men's at 25-44, the data then tails off with no secondary peak.

There is a younger workforce within the women's population as there is a larger percentage of people under 25 (8.6% for women and 6.9% for men) and fewer in the 50+ group (23.4% for women and 35.4% for men) (figure 19). It is therefore even more concerning when we look at leavers data later in the report as almost 50% of women's leaver data is for women under the age of 34.
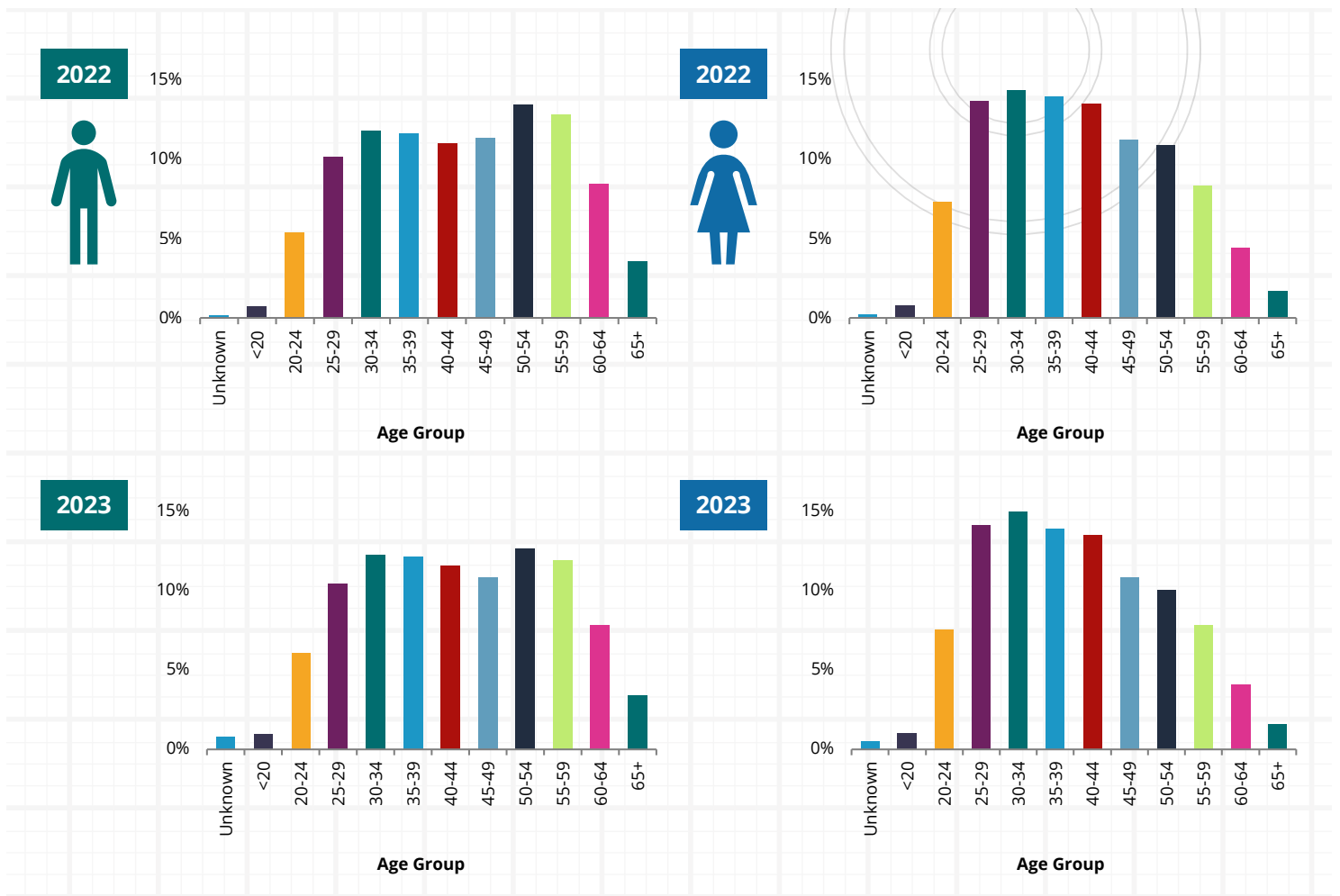
Figure 19: age profiles for men and women 2022 and 2023.

Figure 20: 2023 age profiles for part time workers. Broken down into men and women.

There are distinct age profiles when it comes to gender and the part time workforce. Women who are part time employees have a peak at the 35-44 age range which is then followed by a steady decline (figure 20). Men who are part time employees have a peak at 65+ with a slight secondary peak at 35-39. This peak for women is around childbearing age and so indicates that women become part time workers around this age, whereas men wait until later in their career to move into part time roles around retirement age.

When looking at the voluntary leavers data later in this report it is evident that women also tend to leave the industry at much younger ages than men; 46% of women leave before the age of 34. In conjunction with the age profile data for women in figure 19, this data indicates that women may not be coming back post children. It would be useful to engage with women around the age of 25-40 to see the reason they have for leaving the industry to be able to identify and then address any issues that come to light.

There may be issues such as a lack of part time working options, the need for flexible working hours, attitude to promotions when people start to have children, and substandard parental leave packages that may cause women to either change industry before they have children or not to return once they have had them. The data in figure 20 also suggests that there may be accommodations made for men staying in their roles later in life, such as moving into advisory or consultancy roles, which enable them to work part time. The same attitude towards making accommodations for men need to be applied to women.

These issues faced by women may also impact men and non-binary people, so the learnings and actions taken from engaging with these women should be applied to all employees, such as enhance parental leave and flexible working. Engaging and acting on this issue is key in attracting and retaining women with their knowledge and talent for longer.

Explore the FIR Programme's free resources:

APPRENTICES IN CONSTRUCTION: ONE STEP FORWARD...

HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE GET ON THE CAREER LADDER

SUPPORTING YOUNG APPRENTICES: GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYERS

Disability

2.8% of employees declared that they had a disability in 2023. This is an increase on last year's value of 2.4% and on the 2021 value of 2.2% (figure 21 and 22). This percentage is still however very far behind the ONS' value of 17.8%.

There could be a few reasons for this, for example a lack of data being reported, as only 312 companies collect and reported disability data. Therefore, 225 organisations reported their disability data as 100% unknown.

Unknown data made up 35.2% of the data set; a reduction on last year's 44%. Employees may also not want to disclose that they have a disability due to perceived prejudice, not wanting to feel like burden, or not knowing they have a disability. This is common when it comes to people who are neurodivergent for example. Many people with disabilities such a dyslexia, ADHD and autism often go undiagnosed or do not consider themselves to have disability. This may lead to them not disclosing this to their employers and so choose the 'prefer not to say' option.

62.5% of the reporting organisations have reasonable adjustments policies which should in fact be 100% as noted in the policies section (figure 6). Disability is one of the main areas for improvement for the built environment when it comes to being more inclusive, collecting data, and supporting employees with disabilities.

17.8% Disabled ONS

2.8% Disabled
2.4% in 2022
2.2% in 2021

127 companies collect data on disability types

62.5% Policy for reasonable adjustments
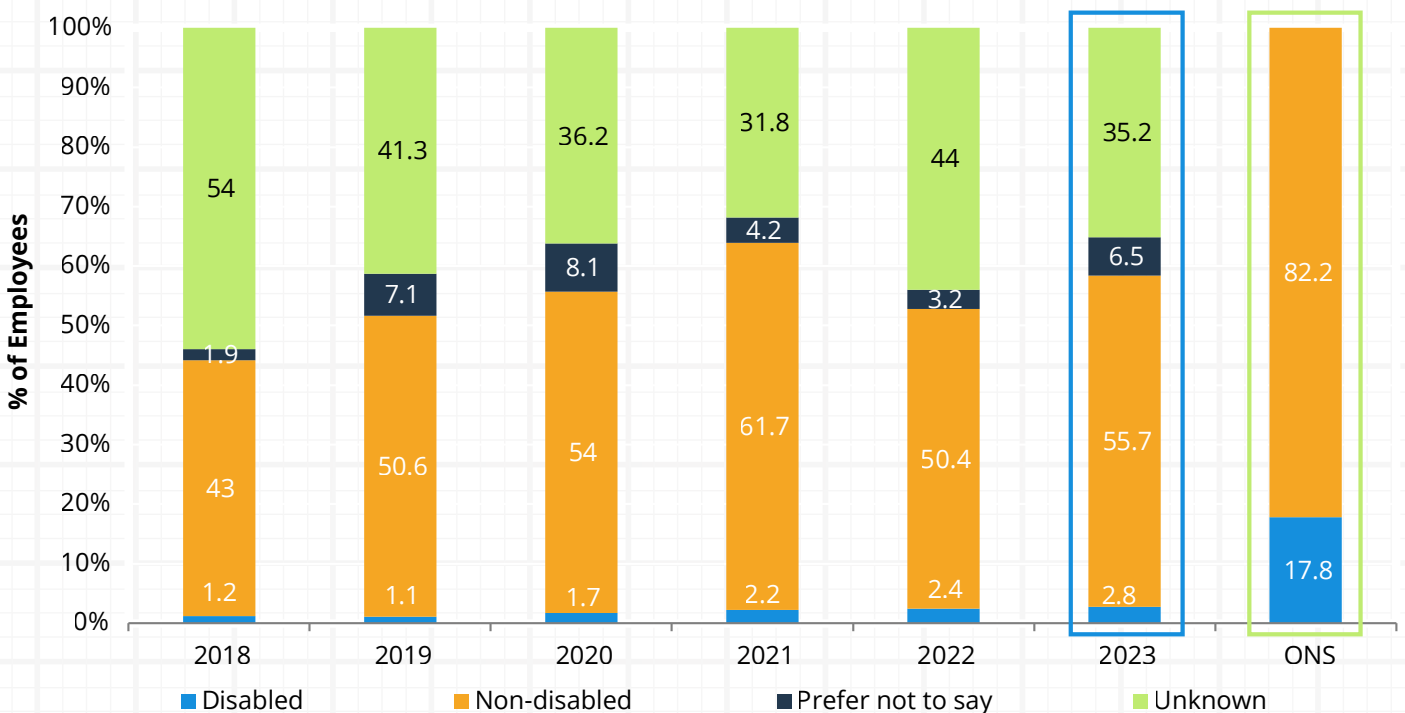
Figure 21: disability data summary.

Figure 22: disability data 2018-2023

Year-on-year

The percentage of people with a disability has slowly increased since 2018, with 2023 being the highest value reported (figure 22). However, the percentages are drastically below the ONS value of 17.8%. The percentage of unknowns has fluctuated from 54% in 2018 to 31.8% at its lowest in 2020. This decrease in unknowns compared to last year data does hint to more organisations collecting this data regardless of their size.

The 'prefer not to say' data set has also varied over the years with the largest value in 2020 at 8.1%, and the lowest value of 1.9% in 2016. The 'prefer not to say' responses have increased since last year indicating that people are feeling less comfortable disclosing whether they have a disability or not; they may not feel safe, or they may feel that they may be discriminated against if they do declare a disability. There is no change in the percentage of those with a disability when looking at age (figure 23). The percentage remains consistent throughout and so age does not seem to impact if people feel comfortable or not disclosing their disability data.
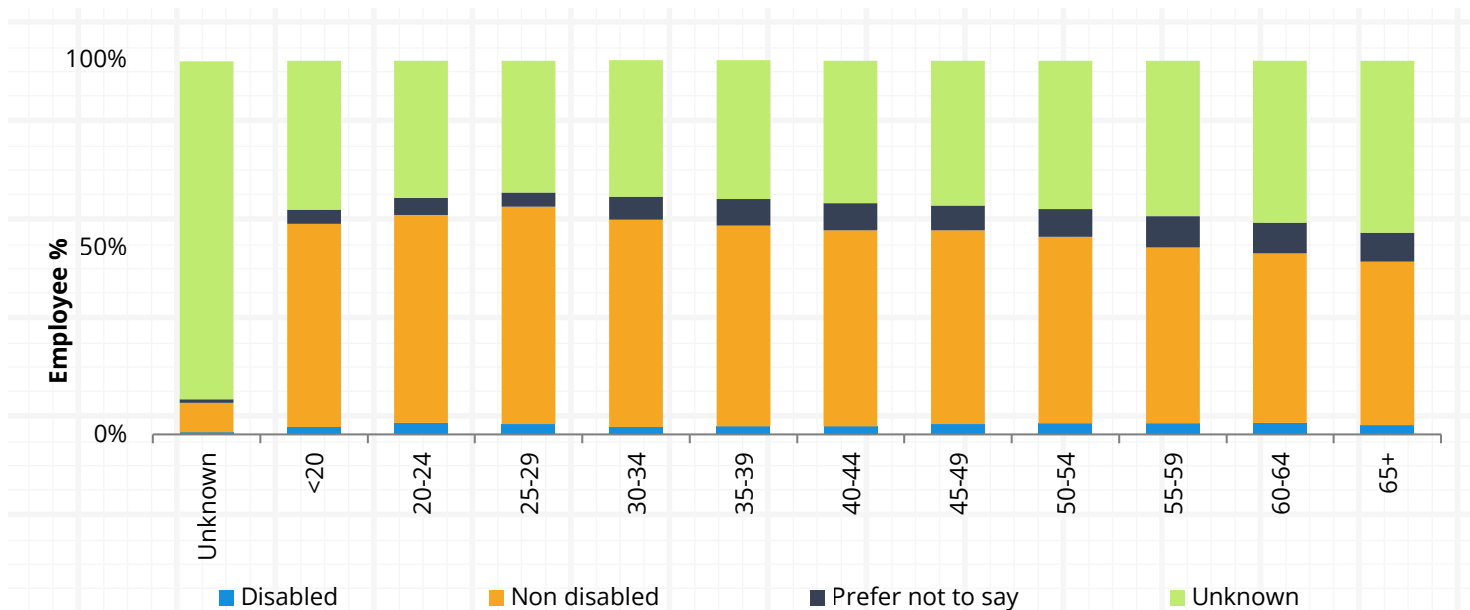

Figure 23: disability data age profile 2023

Tier

When the data is split into tiers it is clear to see that tiers 2 and 3 have lower percentages than tier 1 (figure 24). Tier 2 decreased by 0.7% this year, which is a 68% decrease on last year's data set.

52% of tier 2 and 57% of tiers 3 data set is unknown data and so this lack of reported data may be skewing the percentage with a disability. The unknown percentage drops to 32.7% for tier 1, which is still substantial but much lower than that of tier 2 and 3. The increased collection of this data should be promoted to get a more transparent view of each of the tiers moving forward.
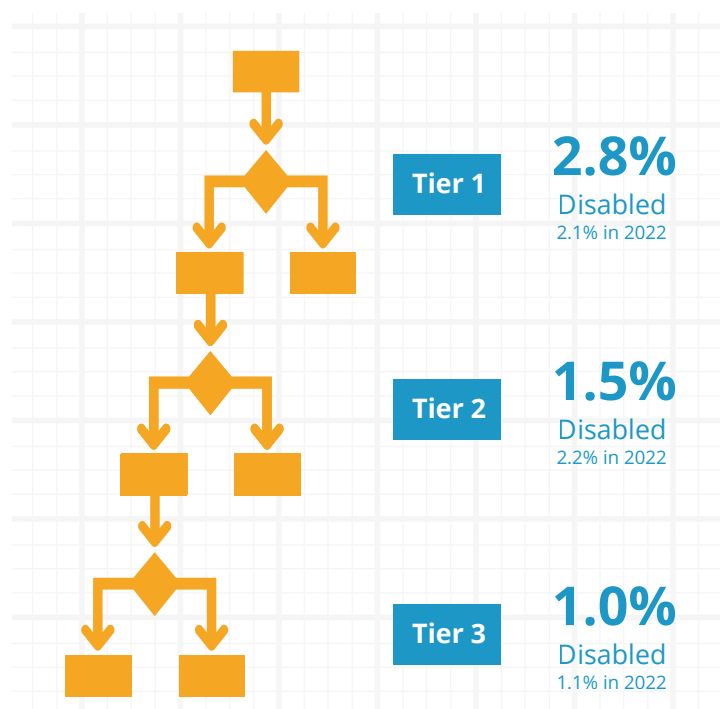

Tier 1
2.8%
Disabled
2.1% in 2022

Tier 2
1.5%
Disabled
2.2% in 2022

Tier 3
1.0%
Disabled
1.1% in 2022

Figure 24: disability data tier breakdown.

Contractor vs consultant

The data differs when it is split into contractors vs consultants. 3% of contractors identify as having a disability and 3.9% for consultants (figure 25). Consultants are more likely to ask their employees for their disability data as only 32.8% of the data is unknown vs 44.1% for contractors. Consultants are also more likely to disclose this data as only 4.4% of the data set is 'prefer not to say' data whereas for contractors this rises to 8.2%.
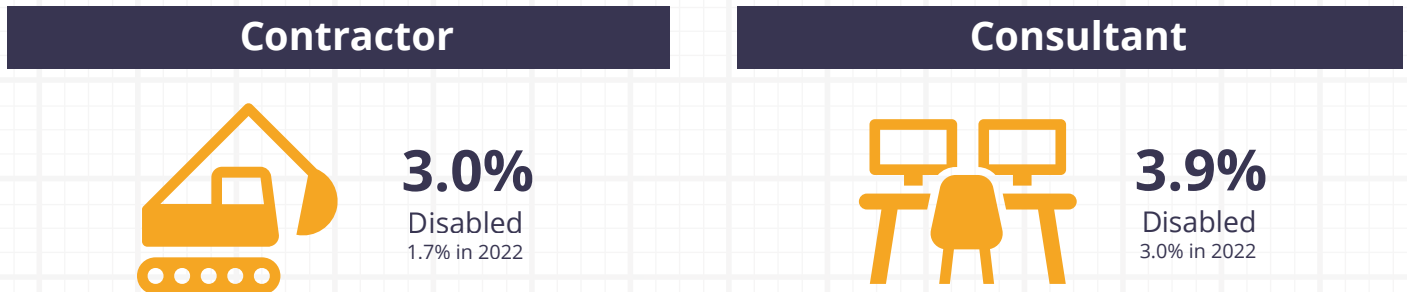

Contractor	Consultant
3.0% Disabled 1.7% in 2022	**3.9%** Disabled 3.0% in 2022

Figure 25: disability data contractor vs consultant.

The lack of data collection and disclosing of data for the contractors may be due to the majority of the workforce in this type of organisations working onsite and so may be less likely to have physical disabilities due to the nature of the work. Alternatively, employees also may not wish to disclose any disability they may have as they may be apprehensive of any judgement, be deemed a burden, not listened to, or there may not be a policy in place to aid making reasonable adjustments. This is something that should be investigated further to increase knowledge around disability disclosure.

Explore the FIR Programme's free resources:

THE COMPLETE GUIDE FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE

DISABILITY RECRUITMENT INCLUSION: WEBINAR RECORDING

DISABILITY CONFIDENT

DISABILITY INCLUSION: NUNEATON SIGNS FAMILY

Ethnicity

ONS' 2021 census reported 18.5% of the UK population being from ethnic minorities and 81.5% being white. The diversity survey's 2023 industry benchmark was 13.6% ethnic minority groups and so ~5% below ONS' figure (figure 26 and 27). This is a decrease of 0.1% from last year. This shows that workforce diversity has remain unchanged even though this area was a target for improvement; and so further work needed to increase ethnic minority workforce representation. There is room for improvement.

We have limited ethnicity pay gap data this year, as only 15 organisations reported their ethnicity pay gap. 442 organisations stated that they do not have the data and have no intention of collecting it. 92 organisations said they intend to collect this in the future. This is an area of focus for engagement with these organisations to educate and share why collecting this data is important to identify and address pay disparities. Pay ranges and job roles should also be explored to see where ethnic minority groups are concentrated within organisations. Quartile and bonus pay reporting aids insights on this topic.

We continue to see a high proportion of ethnic minority applicants; 52.5% apply across the built environment. This is a 12.6% increase in the proportion of ethnic minority applicants compared to 2022 (figure 27). This topic is explored further in the attraction and recruitment section of this report.

18.5%
Ethnic Minorities ONS

13.6%
Ethnic Minorites
13.7% in 2022
13.1% in 2021

Figure 26: ethnic minority data summary.

13.6%
Ethnic minorities (ONS 18.5%)

-0.1%
From 2022

52.5%
Of 395,676 applicants were ethnic minority

+12.6%
From 2022

90
Ethnic minority applicants per hire (28.4 for white)

50
for Ethnic Minorites 16 for White in 2022

13.8%
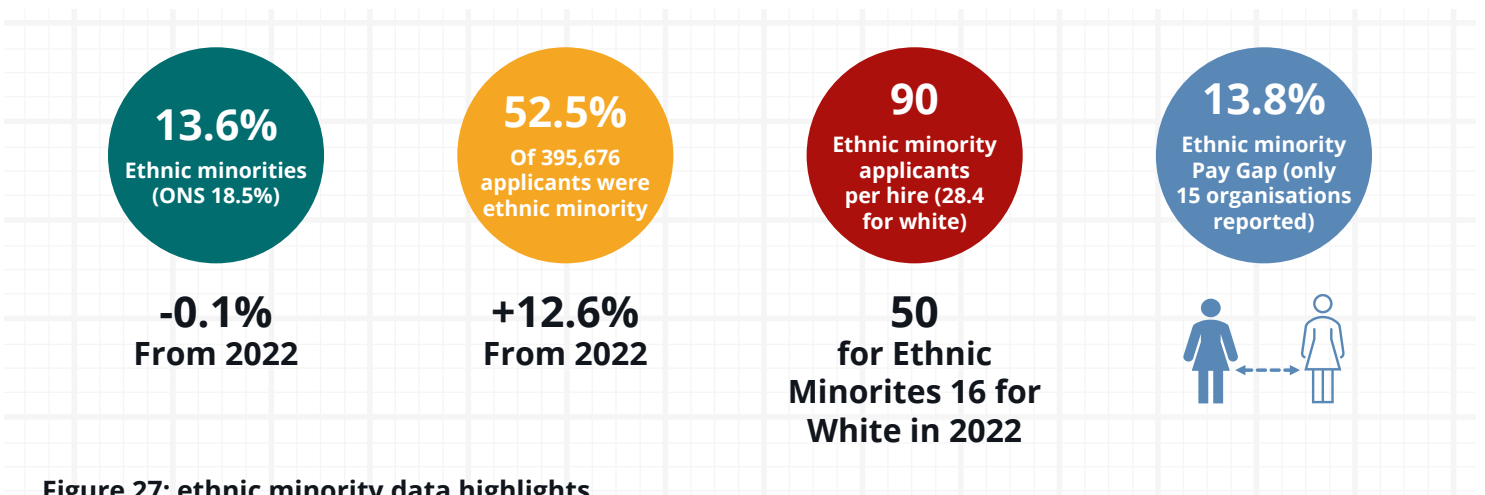Ethnic minority Pay Gap (only 15 organisations reported)

Figure 27: ethnic minority data highlights.

Tiers

The proportion of ethnic minority groups varied amongst the tiers. Tier 1 has the highest percentage followed by tier 2 and then 3. Tier 2 has seen a decrease from 13.3% to 8.6% (figure 28). Tier 3 saw an increase in the percentage as they didn't report any ethnic minority data in 2022. The percentage is extremely low at 6.3%. The unknown dataset for tier 3 sits at 49.8% and so there is room for improvement in terms of data collection and ethnic minority groups representation in tier 3. This is mirrored to some extent for tier 2, as the ethnic minority percentage is low at 8.6%, which was a decrease from the 2022 data, and the unknown data set sits at 32.5%.
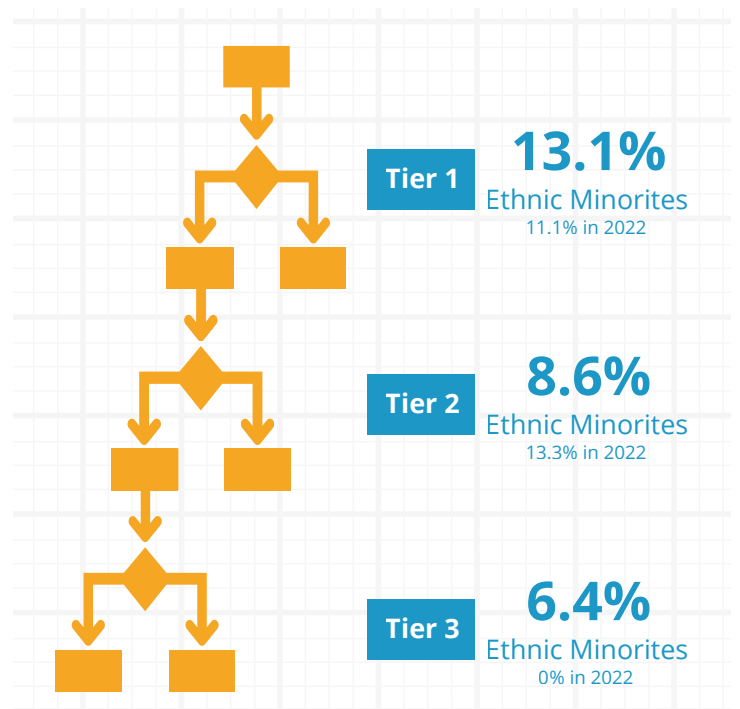

Tier 1 **13.1%** Ethnic Minorites
11.1% in 2022

Tier 2 **8.6%** Ethnic Minorites
13.3% in 2022

Tier 3 **6.4%** Ethnic Minorites
0% in 2022

Figure 28: ethnic minority group percentage tier breakdown.

Year-on-year

The percentage of ethnic minority groups has increased consistently since 2016 with two dips: one in 2017 by 1% and this year with 0.1% (figure 29). The percentage, however, has never met or exceed the ONS value. The percentage of unknowns has fluctuated over time with the largest percentage being in 2017 with 31% and the lowest value in 2021 with 13%. The 'prefer not to say' data set has been present for the last three years and has been steadily increasing. This year we saw an increase in both the percentage of unknown and the 'prefer not to say' data sets.

There need to be collective effort to encourage employees to self-identify, reporting this data and for organising to collect this data. This will help to improve data quality and transparency of representation of the industry.
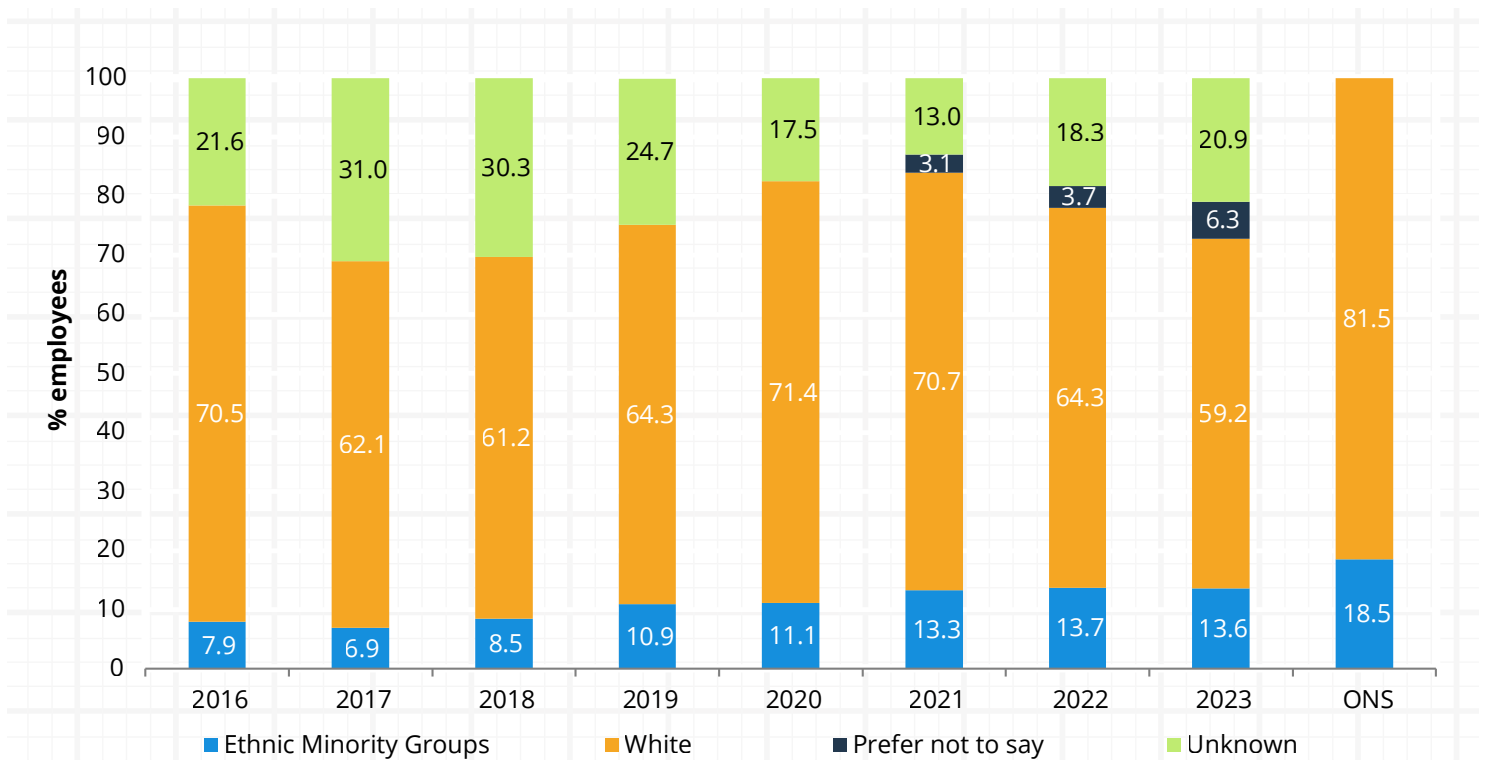

Figure 29: ethnicity data summary 2016-2023.

Breakdown

There was variation for most ethnic groups reported compared to last year. The categories in green have increased, red decreased (also includes the increase in unknown and prefer not to says as these are negative increases) and yellow shows no change.

Figure 30 shows that there was an increase for African, other Asian, any other ethnic group and other black, but a reduction for all other groups. The largest decrease was for other mixed ethnicity and the largest increase was for other Asian. Overall, there was a decrease of 0.1%. There is significant increase in the number of 'prefer not to say' with the percentage has doubling since last year.

Ethnicity	% employees		% Change	ONS
	2022	2023		
African	2.1	2.3	0.2	2.5
Any other ethnic group	2.1	2.2	0.1	1.6
Arab	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.6
Bangladeshi	0.5	0.4	-0.1	1.1
Caribbean	1.4	1.1	-0.3	1.0
Chinese	0.5	0.4	-0.1	0.7
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.2	0	-0.2	0.1
Indian	2.4	2.2	-0.2	3.1
Other Asian	1.2	1.6	0.4	1.6
Other Black	0.6	0.8	0.2	0.5
Other mixed ethnicity	0.6	0.1	-0.5	0.8
Other white	10.7	10.4	-0.3	6.2
Pakistani	1	1	0.0	2.7
Prefer not to say	3.6	6.3	2.7	0.0
White & Asian	0.4	0.3	-0.1	0.8
White & Black African	0.4	0.2	-0.2	0.4
White & Black Caribbean	0.5	0.4	-0.1	0.9
White British	52.7	50.3	-2.4	74.4
White Irish	1.2	0.9	-0.3	0.9
Roma	0	0	0.0	0.2
Unknown	18	18.9	0.9	0.0
Ethnic Minorities groups	**13.7**	**13.6**	**-0.1**	**18.5**

Table 3: ethnicity percentage change 2022 and 2023

It would be beneficial to expand the categories in the future so that employees can select at a more granular level which one they identify with. This has not been actioned previously as the survey follows the ONS' ethnicity categories to allow benchmarks from the census to be used.

Sectors

Rail, facilities management and road are leading the way with percentages above the industry benchmark, as shown in green. The sectors in blue are below this years and last year's benchmarks for ethnic minority groups.

Rail, facilities management, and road should be engaged with to see how they achieve these percentages as they also had robust data sets. Rail, for example, had only 16.9% unknown data out of their 240,000 employees, and FM with 9.2% for 132,000 employees (figure 30).
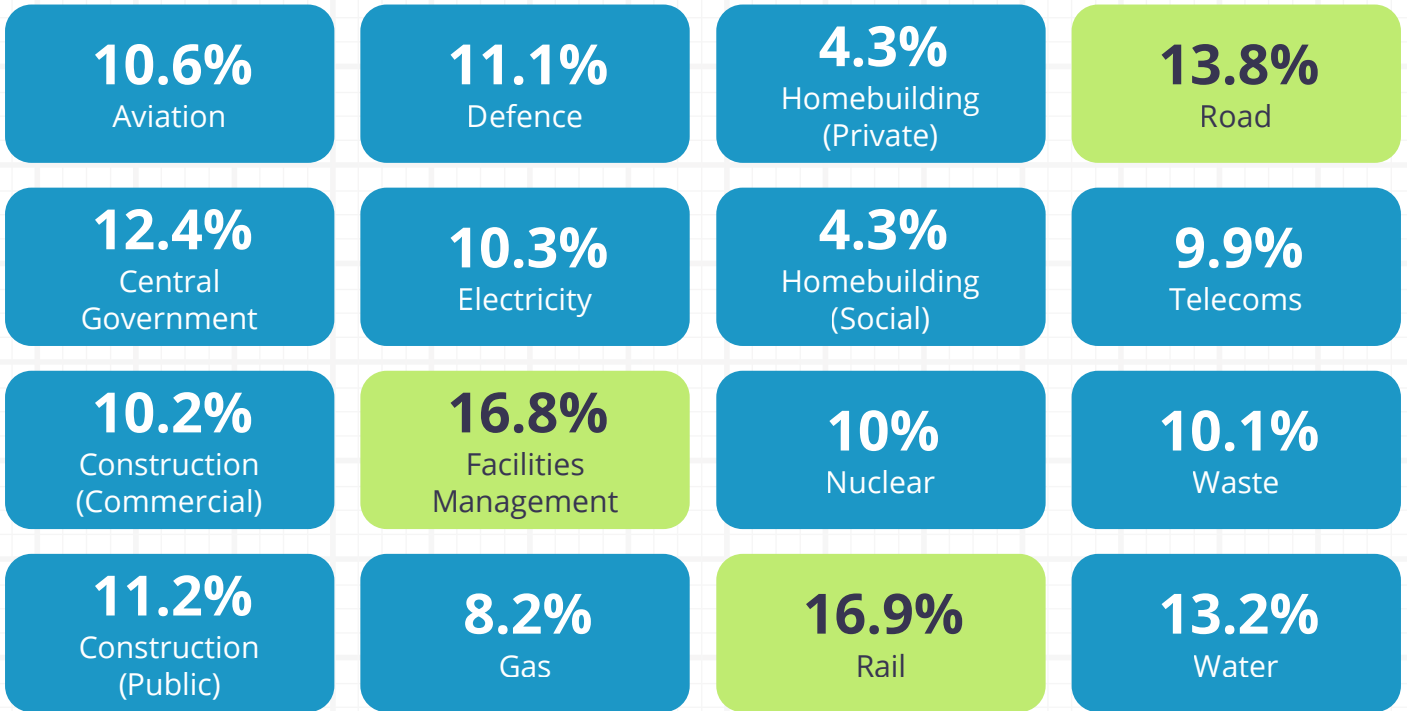
10.6% Aviation	**11.1%** Defence	**4.3%** Homebuilding (Private)	**13.8%** Road
12.4% Central Government	**10.3%** Electricity	**4.3%** Homebuilding (Social)	**9.9%** Telecoms
10.2% Construction (Commercial)	**16.8%** Facilities Management	**10%** Nuclear	**10.1%** Waste
11.2% Construction (Public)	**8.2%** Gas	**16.9%** Rail	**13.2%** Water

Figure 30: ethnicity data sector breakdown 2023.

Homebuilding (social and private) needs to be a specific focus with the lowest sector value of 4.3% and so is far behind the industry benchmark and all other sectors.

Contractor vs consultant

The data differs when split up into contractors vs consultants. 13.2% of contractors and 13.7% consultants a from ethnic minority groups (figure 31). These values are not significantly different to the industry benchmark or to each other. Both data set have however decreased from last year by around 1%.

Contractor	**Consultant**
13.2% Ethnic minority groups 14.0% in 2022	**13.7%** Ethnic minority groups 14.7% in 2022

Figure 31: ethnicity data contractor vs consultant.

When looking at the ethnic minority group percentage in SMEs, we can see that SMEs have a percentage far below that of the industry benchmark at 6.4% (figure 32). Larger organisations have a value of 13.9%. 29 out of the 382 SMEs that reported this year had values above the industry benchmark. For larger organisations, which have a larger weighting, this was only 13. SMEs also had a larger highest value at 53% compared to 46.8% for the larger organisations (figure 32).

This very lower percentage of ethnic minorities in SMEs needs to be addressed. Part of the issue may be due to 35.8% of the SMEs data set being unknown data, which may skew the results. This is also the case for the overall industry data set which is made up of 20.9% unknown data. For larger organisations the % unknown was 20.5% and so still a significant proportion. This is a factor that need to be addressed, regardless of the organisational size.
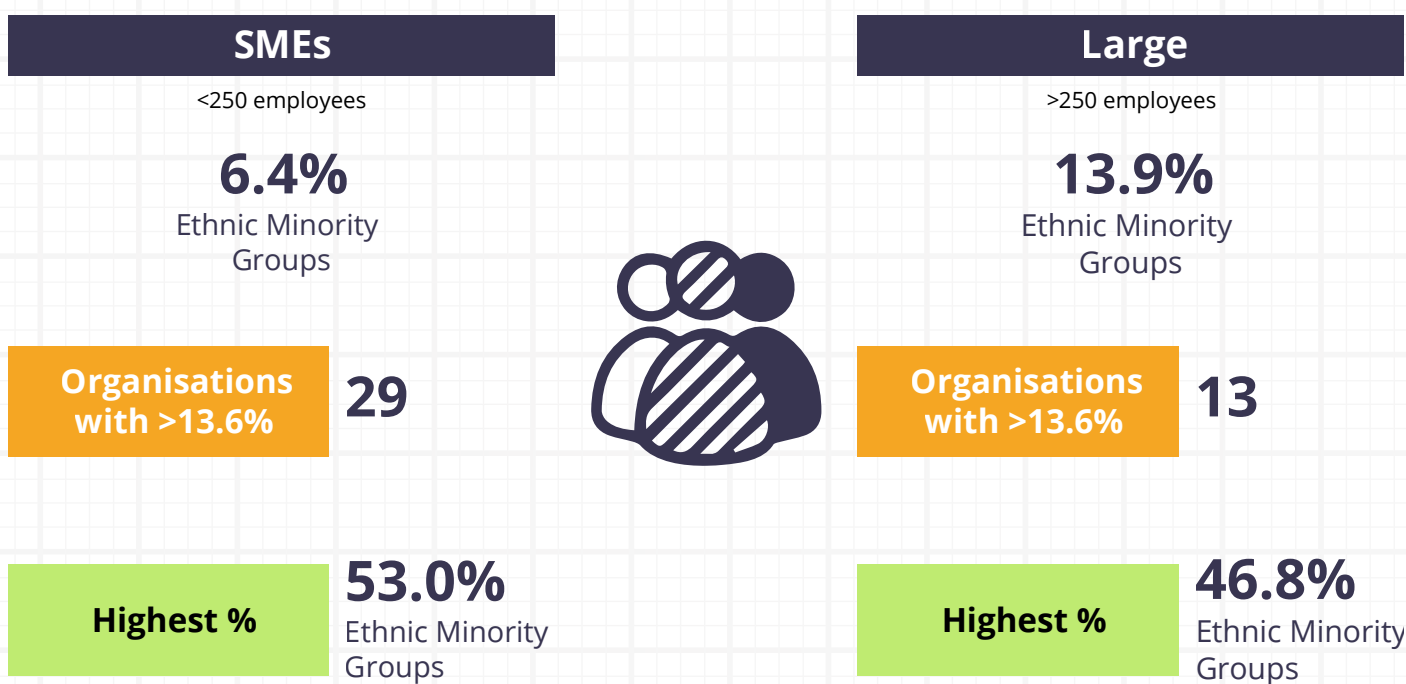
SMEs	Large
<250 employees	>250 employees

	SMEs		Large
	6.4% Ethnic Minority Groups		**13.9%** Ethnic Minority Groups
Organisations with >13.6%	29	**Organisations with >13.6%**	13
Highest %	**53.0%** Ethnic Minority Groups	**Highest %**	**46.8%** Ethnic Minority Groups

Figure 32: SME and larger organisations ethnicity data summary 2023.

Sectors

When SMEs ethnicity data is split into sectors, 21.2% of the aviation sector's workforce are from ethnic minority groups (figure 33). Aviation was the only sector that exceeds the industry benchmark, SME percentage, as well as the ONS' value (shown in green). Aviation also had only 9% unknown data which gives it a very robust and transparent dataset.

Homebuilding (social) and facilities management are shown in orange which indicated that they have values above the SME value but below the industry benchmark. All other sectors do not meet the SME value or industry benchmark.

21.2% Aviation	**3.3%** Defence	**4.9%** Homebuilding (Private)	**4.9%** Road
n/a Central Government	**1.4%** Electricity	**6.7%** Homebuilding (Social)	**2.4%** Telecoms
4.7% Construction (Commercial)	**7.5%** Facilities Management	**4.2%** Nuclear	**4.7%** Waste
4.0% Construction (Public)	**2.0%** Gas	**4.5%** Rail	**3.3%** Water

Figure 33: SME sector ethnicity data summary 2023.

Gas, which has one of the lowest percentages for ethnic minority groups, does not have a huge percentage of unknown data, at 12.9%. This shows that the gas sector is asking questions on diversity and the small unknown percentage is not impeding the data or skewing the results to the same extent it may be in others. Therefore, the gas sector has a more robust percentage than the industry benchmark and so gas should be a sector to focus on was ethnic minority groups are not present in the sector to the level they should be.

Overall, the sectors shown in blue should be engaged with to try and increase the percentage of ethnic minorities in these sectors. Sites should be visited to assess if and how processes can be put in place to attract and retain ethnic minority groups. There is a need to identify why ethnic minority groups are not represented in these sectors and address them. Facilities management, aviation, and homebuilding (social) should be engaged with to see how they are achieving these percentages.

Learn more!

RACE AND ETHNICITY IN THE MANAGEMENT PIPELINE

INVESTING IN ETHNICITY AND RACE IN THE WORKPLACE

REFLECTIONS ON BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITY EXPERIENCES IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT SECTOR

RACE AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE – PART 1

RACE AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE – PART 2

Sexual Orientation

This year's percentage of people that are part of the LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, intersex, asexual. The "+" stands for all the other identities not encompassed in the short acronym) community increased from 1.7% to 2.04% (figure 34). This value is below the ONS' 3.14%.

This year three additional categories were added; asexual, pansexual, and queer, due to the census data identifying these as common categories which people are self-identifying as, and so have been added to the census data and question set (figure 34). These additional options were used for the first time in this years' survey. All existing reporting organisations, as well as new reporters for next year, should include these as options for their employees to select so the data that is reported is as accurate and inclusive as possible.

3.14%
LGBTQIA+
ONS

2.04%
LGBTQIA+
1.7% in 2022
1.5% in 2021

Pansexual, Asexual and Queer

Figure 34: LGBTQIA+ data summary and additional categories

Year-on-year

Most of the sexual orientation data has been unknown and 'prefer not to say' since 2016 (69%) and this is still the case in 2023 (61%). Overall, there has been a decrease in the unknown percentage of 11% since 2021, alongside an increase in 'prefer not to say' of 7.1% for the same period (table 4 and figure 35). This shows organisations are seeing the value in collecting data, but employees themselves are not as willing to disclose this information. There is scope to investigate why this may be the case, such as organisational/sector/industry culture that may be preventing people feeling comfortable to disclose this information. This may hint to wider issues such as discrimination based on sexual orientation.
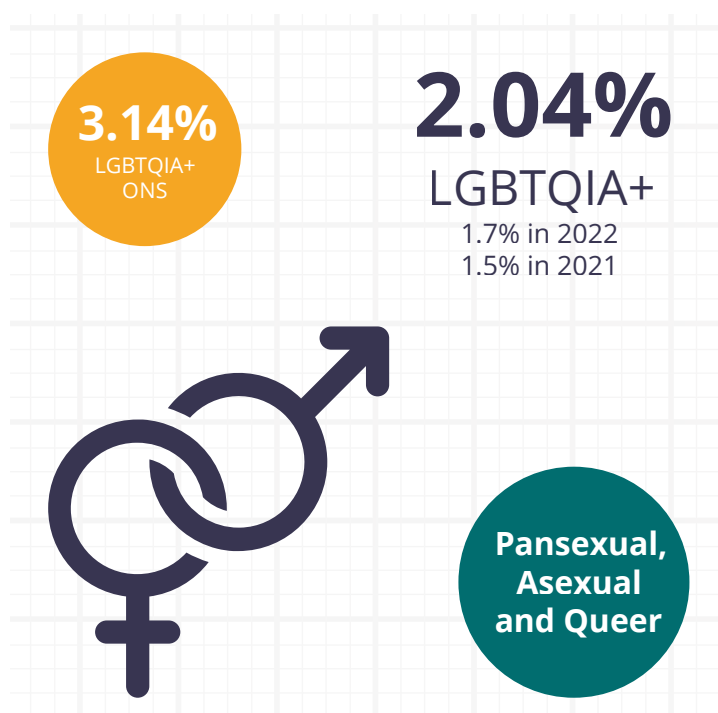
Sexual Orientation	% of employees					ONS
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Heterosexual	45.9	34.6	34.4	38.6	38	89.4
Gay or Lesbian		0.8	0.9	1	1	1.5
Bisexual		0.4	0.4	0.5	0.7	1.3
Other sexual orientation		0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.02
Asexual					0.02	0.06
Pansexual					0.02	0.23
Queer					0	0.03
LGBTQIA+	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.7	2.04	3.14
Unknown	46.6	47.2	59.6	50.2	48.4	7.5
Prefer not to say	6.3	16.9	4.6	9.6	11.7	

Table 4: sexual orientation breakdown 2019-2023
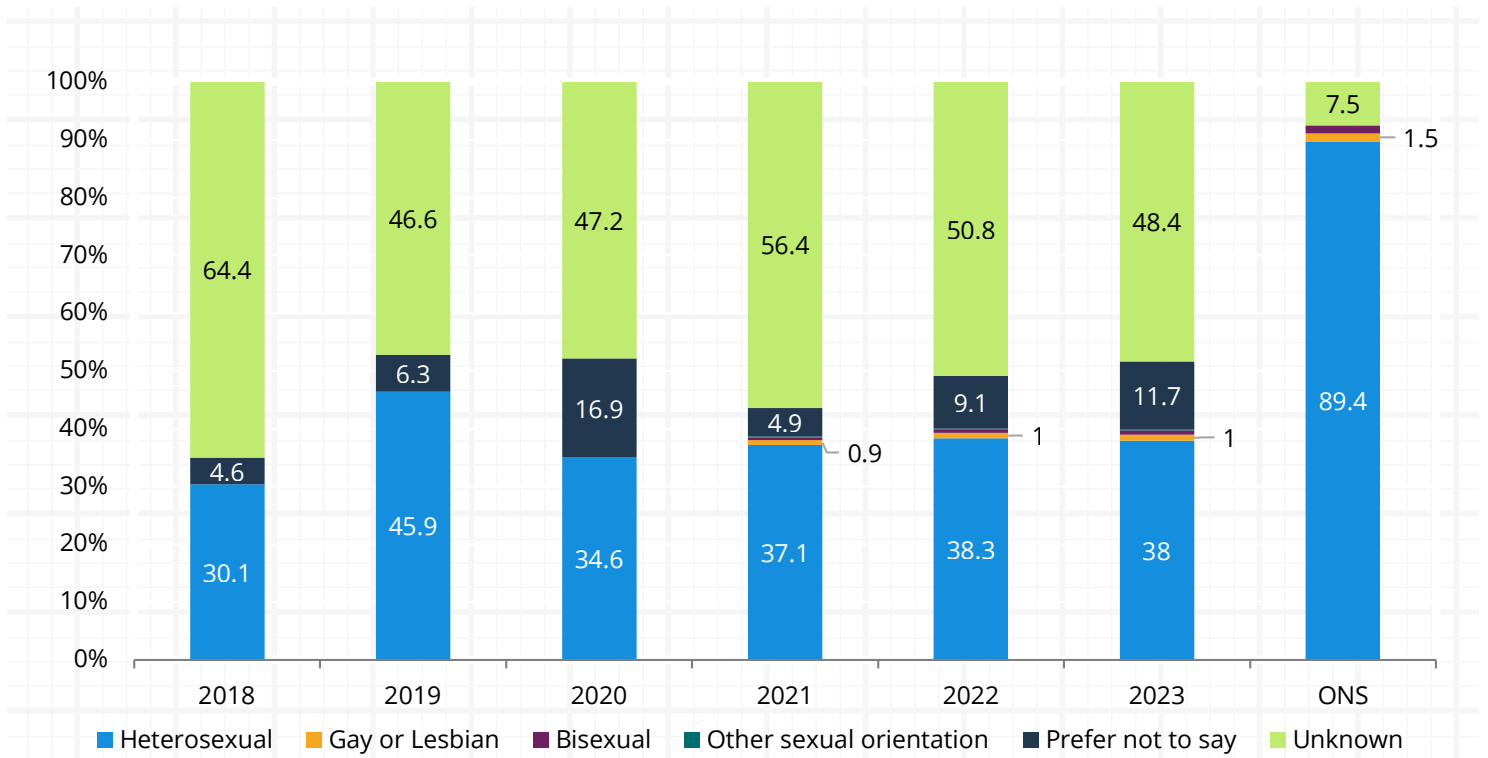
Figure 35: sexual orientation percentages 2018-2023

Tiers

The trend seen for the other protected characteristics and the tier breakdown follows for sexual orientation; tier 1 has the highest percentage followed by tier 2 and then tier 3 (figure 36).

The industry benchmark value includes data from the clients (Transport for London, HS2, National Highways and Network Rail) and so pulls the overall figure up to 2.04% due to their large workforce numbers.

There is a great need to engage with tier 3 to encourage the collection of sexual orientation data, as 77.3% of the tier data set is unknown. Some SMEs may not collect this information due to the size of their organisations being small that people may feel uncomfortable disclosing this data. However, it would be more informative for

Tier 1

2.0%
LGBTQIA+
1.6% in 2022

Tier 2

1.0%
LGBTQIA+
1.0% in 2022

Tier 3

0.3%
LGBTQIA+
1.8% in 2022

Figure 36: sexual orientation tier breakdown.

people to use the prefer not to say option rather than not being asked at all. The prefer not to say option is still valid data and provides insights, such as an increase in 'prefer not to say' responses shows that people are not comfortable disclosing their sexual orientation.
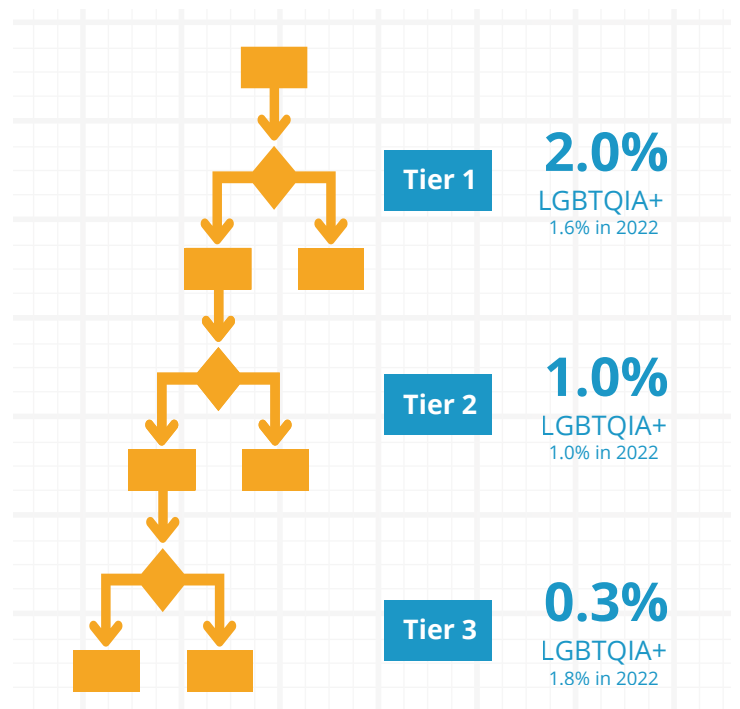
Contractor vs consultant

The data differs when split into contractors vs consultants. 1.6% of contractors and 2.3% consultants are part of the LGBTQIA+ community (figure 37). Therefore, the consultants value is above that of the industry benchmark and has seen an increase on last year's value. Contractors do not perform as well, and the unknown data set makes up 58.2%. This high unknown value may be skewing the data to show a smaller LGBTQIA+ percentage than there is in reality. The consultant's unknowns equate for 39.2% and so have a more robust data set compared to the contractors and the industry, but there is still room for improvement.

Contractor

1.6%
LGBTQIA+
1.7% in 2022

Consultant

2.3%
LGBTQIA+
2.0% in 2022
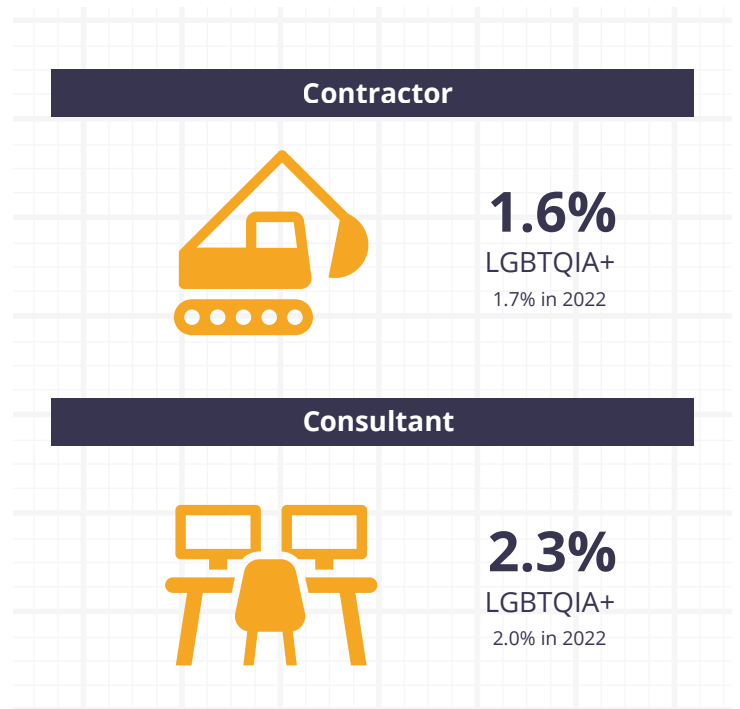
Figure 37: sexual orientation consultant vs contractor breakdown.

Age

When looking at the age profiles you can see that people with sexual orientation other than heterosexual have peaks under the age of 35 (figure 38). The 'prefer not to say' group peaks at 55-59. This younger age profile for people for people identifying as part of the LGBTQIA+ community may be due to increased awareness, less sigma and increased acceptance in general within younger generations. Older generations lived through the AIDS/HIV epidemic in the 1980s which resulted in stigma and stereotypes towards the LGBTQIA+ community. This may be a reason why the prefer not to say category is skewed to the older age groups that lived through this period and may not wish to disclose their sexual orientation.
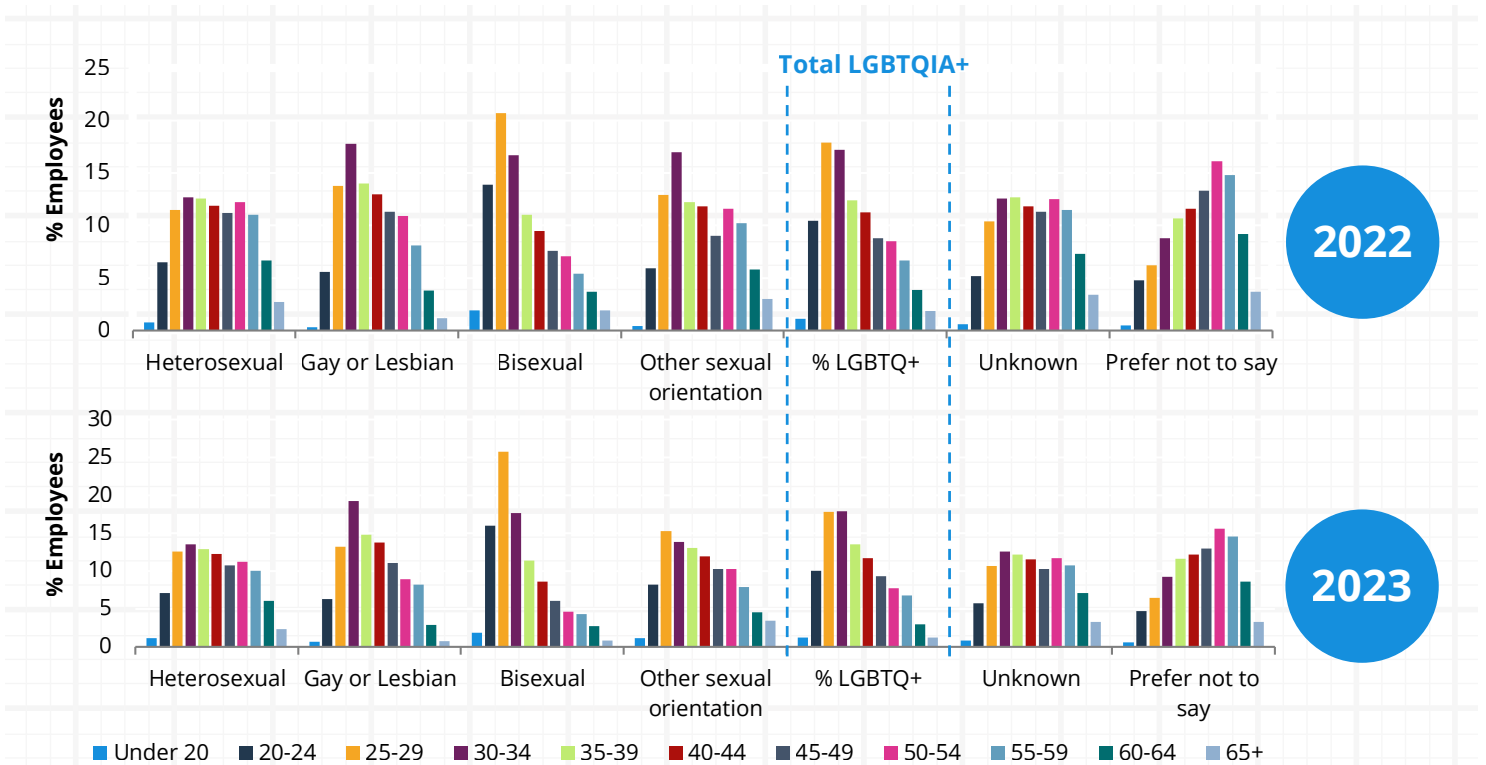

Figure 38: sexual orientation age profile 2022-2023.

Religion and Belief

This year the percentage of employee with a religion or belief has increased to 26.5% from 25.6% in 2022; this is still far below ONS' value of 56.9% (figure 39).

Year-on-year

Data is present for 2018 to 2023; data was not collected in 2016 and 2017. The percentage of employees with a religion or belief has varied throughout the years with the largest percentage of 36.1% in 2020 and the lowest in 2022 with 25.6% (table 5 and figure 40). The unknowns and prefer not to says have contributed to the majority of the data set for all years except 2020 and 2021.

In 2023 the industry benchmark is 26.5%, which is considerably below the ONS' value of 56.9%. When the 'prefer not to say's and unknowns are removed from the 2023

56.9%
all religions or beliefs ONS

26.5%
All religions or beliefs
25.6% in 2022
31.3% in 2021

Figure 39: religion and belief data summary.

data set the percentage of employees with a religion or belief increases to 58.3%, surpassing the ONS benchmark. This shows how the unknowns and 'prefer not to say' responses could be skewing the dataset. To get a more accurate picture of the industry there needs to be a considerable reduction in the unknown values. We have seen an increase in 'prefer not to say' this year, but due to this being accompanied with a reduction in the unknowns this is positive, as prefer not to say is a valid response.

Religion	2021	2022	2023	ONS
No religion	39.4	39.7	41.7	37.2
Christian	46.8	45.8	47.4	46.2
Buddhist	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5
Hindu	2.3	2.2	2.3	1.7
Jewish	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.5
Muslim	4.4	4.7	5.4	6.5
Sikh	0.3	0.4	1.5	0.9
Other religion	5	5.5	0.8	0.6
All religions	60.6	60.3	58.3	56.9

Disclosed data - prefer not to say and unknowns have been removed

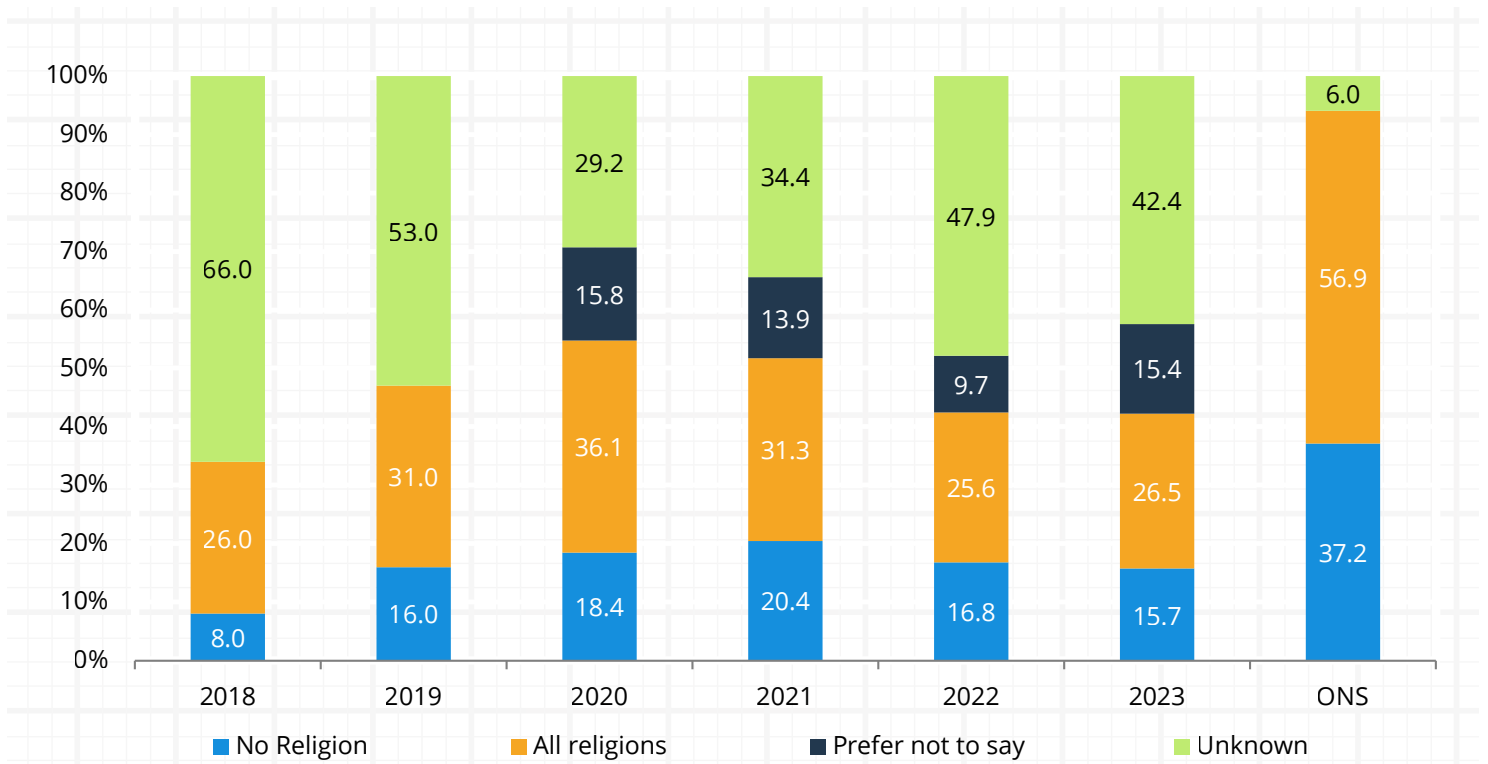**Table 5: religion and belief data 2021-2023.**

Figure 40: religion and belief data 2018-2023.

Tiers

Tier 1 has the highest percentage for employees with a religion or belief, followed by tier 2 and then tier 3 (figure 41).

The industry benchmark value includes data from the clients (Transport for London, HS2, National Highways and Network Rail) and so pulls the overall figure up due to their large workforce numbers.

There is a great need to engage with tier 3 to encourage the collection of religion and belief data as 74.9% of the tier data set is unknown. Tier 1 unknown percentage accounted for 43.3%, tier 2 made up 64.1% and the highest was for tier 3 at 74.9%. This was a decrease from 88.3% in 2022 for tier 3. This is progress, but further attention is needed to increase the robustness of the religion and belief data set.
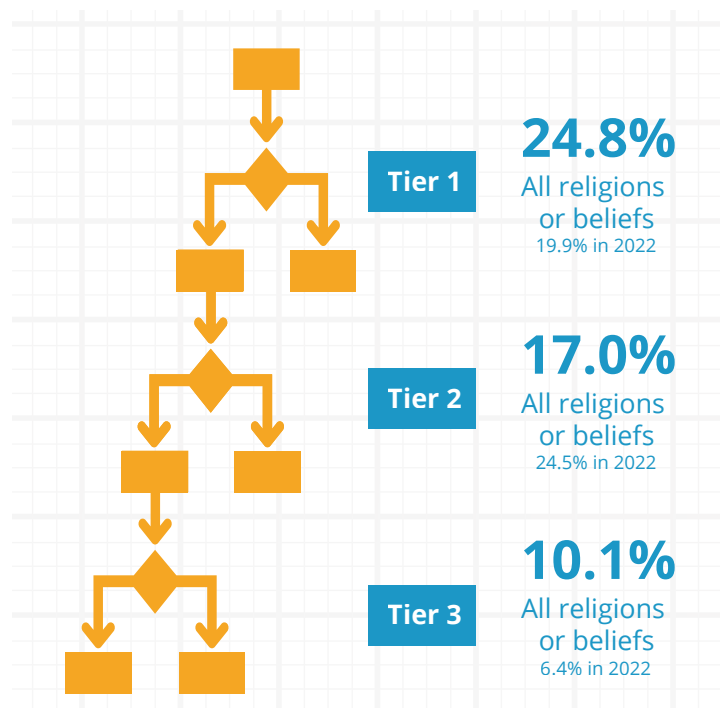

Tier 1

24.8%
All religions or beliefs
19.9% in 2022

Tier 2

17.0%
All religions or beliefs
24.5% in 2022

Tier 3

10.1%
All religions or beliefs
6.4% in 2022

Figure 41: religion and belief data tier breakdown.

Explore the FIR Programme's free resources:

[ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS AND GENDER DIFFERENCES IN INTRAGENERATIONAL ECONOMIC MOBILITY IN ENGLAND AND WALES](#)

Attraction and Recruitment

In 2023 the overall number of applicants reported increased to over 400,000 for the ethnicity category, from 15 organisations, and 490,000 applicants for gender, from 40 organisations (figure 42).

In 2023 the percentage of men and women who applied remained steady only increasing 1% for women. There was a high proportion of ethnic minority applicants with 52.5% of applicants coming from ethnic minority groups. This is great as it shows that our industry is attractive to ethnic minority groups as is a 12.6% increase compared to 2022. The percentages of 'other', 'middle eastern and southern & east Asian' have increased, black had a slight decrease, and white has decreased by 13%. 2023 was the first year that the percentage of white applicants dropped below 50%.
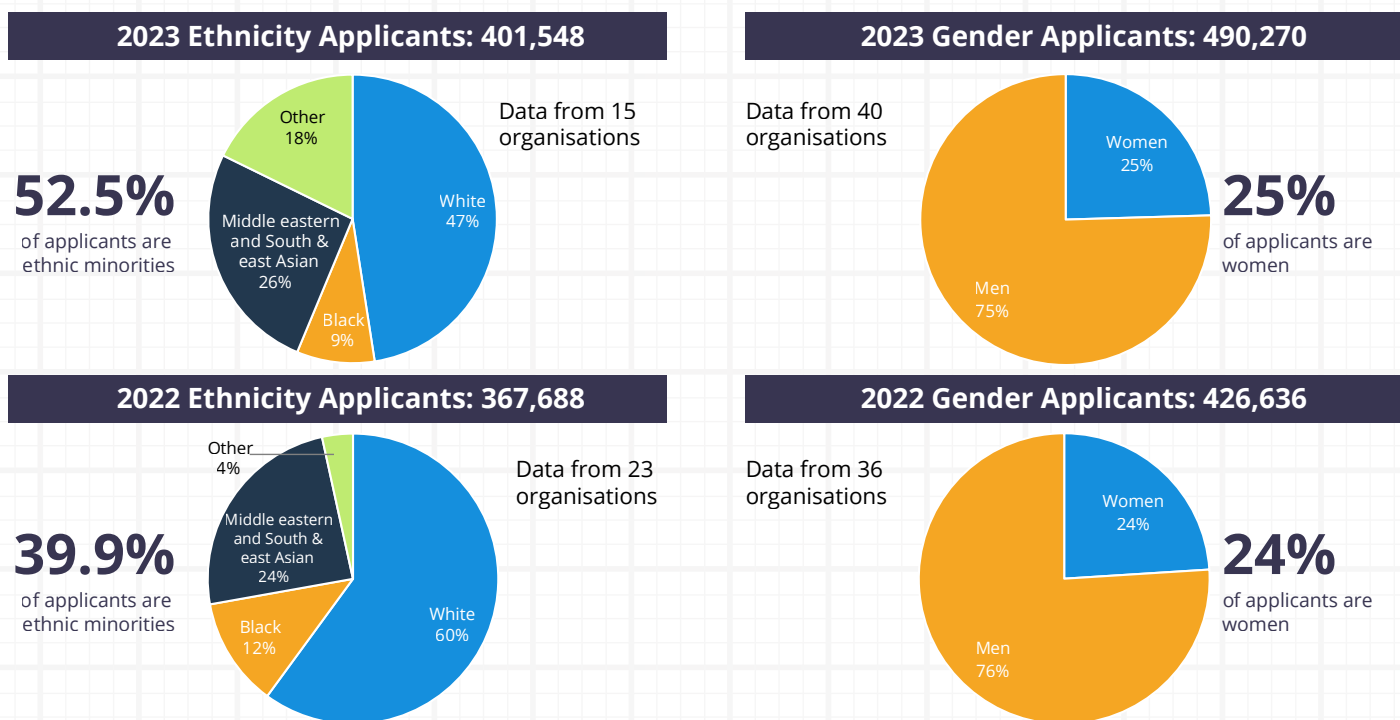

Figure 42: ethnicity and gender makeup of applicants 2022-2023.

It is evident that attracting ethnic minorities applicants to the industry is not a problem as they make up just over half of total. This figure should support the industry in increasing ethnic minority group representation, with the aim of moving towards the ONS' figure of 18.5%. However, hiring remains one of the biggest barriers, with only 1 out of every 90 applicants from an ethnic minority background is hired. In contrast, 1 out of every 28 applicants from a white background is hired.

Figure 43: applicant right to work figures 2023.

This year we also asked for data on the right to work. 25% of applicants did not have the right to work (figure 43). This therefore does not support the rhetoric that has previously been raised with this data: that ethnic minority groups ratio is higher than white due to many applicants not having the right to work. Even if all for the applicants that did not have the right to work were from ethnic minority groups the ratio would still be higher for ethnic minorities. Therefore, this is indicating that biases are involved in the hiring process that are forming a barrier to ethnic minority group people enter in the workforce for this industry.
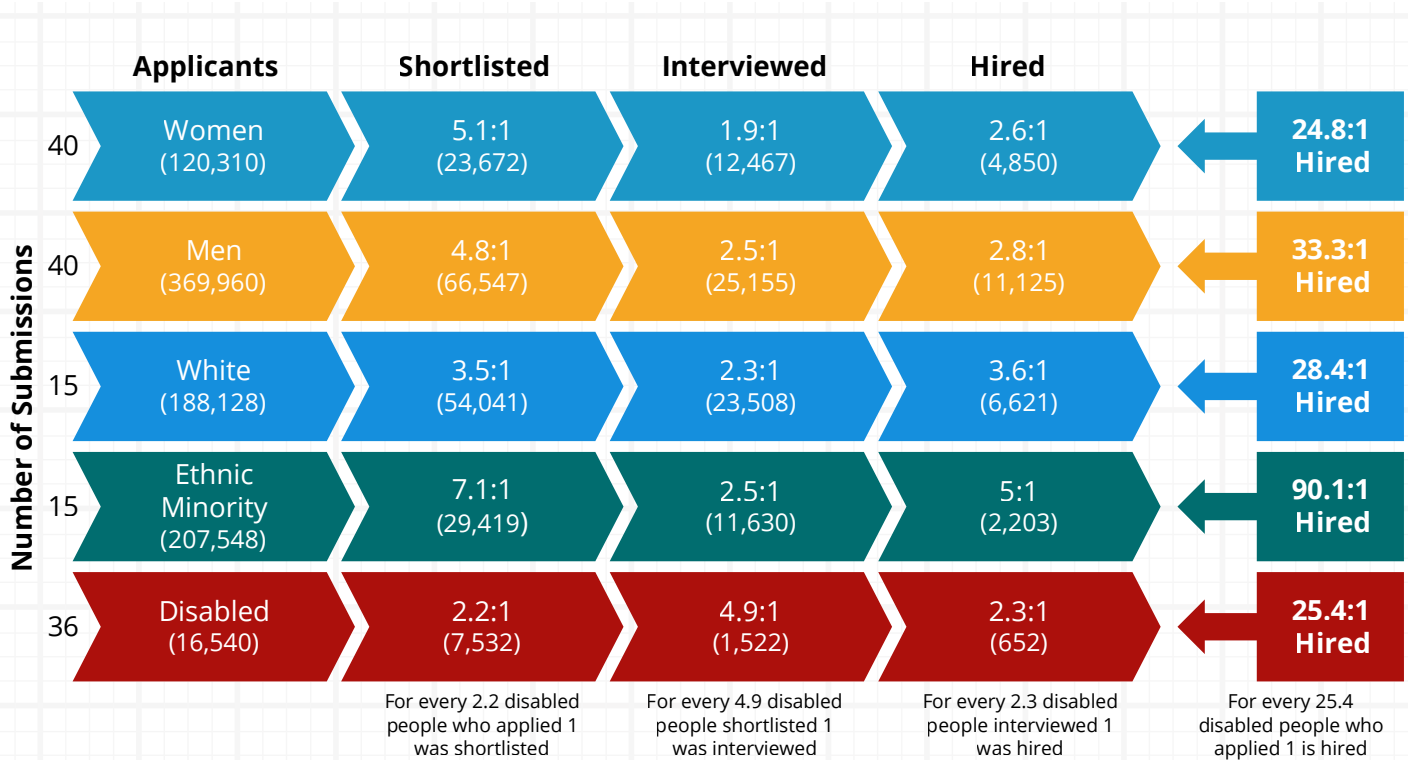

Figure 44: Application to hire ratio breakdown by stages 2023.

White includes White British, white Irish and white other. Roma and Gypsy and Irish travellers are classified as ethnic minority groups under the Race Relations Act, 1976 (amended 2000); the Human Rights Act 1998; and the Equality Act 2010 so have not been included in the ethnic minority groups grouping.

Figure 44 shows the attraction and recruitment data for gender, disability, and ethnicity. Each arrow shows the ratio change of each step. For example, the ratio of women applying to role to then getting shortlist is 5.1:1. The next arrow shows the ration of shortlisted to interviewed etc. The end box on the right shows the overall ratio of applicants to hires.

From this data it is clear to see that it is more difficult to be hired as a man vs woman, and more difficult for ethnic minorities than for white applicants. The large drop off for each group is also evident, which could be linked to biases such as the large ratio value for shortlist to interview for disabled applicant. These ratios are key to understanding where biases are in the hiring process for each of these group, and so show where efforts should be focused to address these large ratios when they arise.

When looking at the breakdown of the data set to see where biases may be entering the hiring process, it is clear to see for ethnic minority groups the shortlisting and hiring stages are the most difficult stages to get through as they have the highest ratios. For women it is at the shortlist stage, and for disabled applicant it is at the interviewing stage (figure 44 and 45).

Disability

For disabled people it is at the interview stage where any physical disabilities would be evident as well as any adjustments that would need to be made to accommodate a disability; these may cause a rise in the ratio (figure 45).
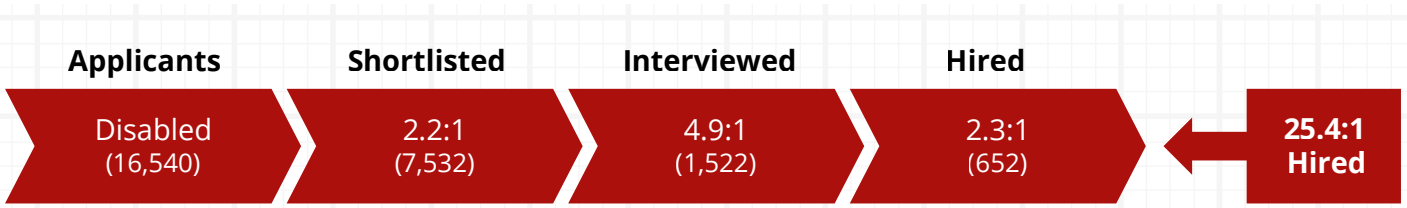
Applicants	Shortlisted	Interviewed	Hired	
Disabled (16,540)	2.2:1 (7,532)	4.9:1 (1,522)	2.3:1 (652)	25.4:1 Hired

Figure 45: disability application to hire ratio breakdown by stages 2023.

Ethnic minority groups and bias

For ethnic minority groups, the ratio at the shortlisting stage may be high due to issue such as 'unfamiliar' names (figure 46). This is a common bias that many organisations try to tackle with blind CVs, where all identifiable characteristics are removed. AI (artificial intelligence) is increasingly being used in the hiring process to streamline hiring and to try and remove bias. AI is told to not look at pronouns and names, for example, when assessing who is best for a certain role. However, biases remain when using AI due to people's data signalling. For example, women typically use more verbs than men, and different age groups use varying language, and so AI is still biased. There has also been research to show that the bias is then reintroduced in the interviewing and hiring stages when people meet face to face. For ethnic minority groups and women, the highest ratio is at the shortlisting stage which may indicate a similar issue, as names often suggests someone's gender and/or race, and so biases can present themselves.

Applicants	Shortlisted	Interviewed	Hired	
Ethnic Minority (207,548)	7.1:1 (29,419)	2.5:1 (11,630)	5:1 (2,203)	90.1:1 Hired

Figure 46: ethnicity application to hire ratio breakdown by stages 2023.

Clearly these issues need to be engaged with further. Active training for people involved in the hiring process should be mandatory so that people can spot and tackle bias behaviours and microaggressions that they may not have been aware of. This should be a focus moving forward.

	Applicants	Number Hired	Overall Ratio :1
African	23,943	237	101.0
Any other ethnic group	65,870	816	80.7
Arab	5,872	56	104.9
Bangladeshi	3,609	47	76.8
Caribbean	3,710	85	43.6
Chinese	7,316	141	51.9
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	74	0	No hires
Indian	57,444	314	182.9
Other Asian	13,947	155	90.0
Other Black	2,857	30	95.2
Other mixed ethnicity	4,290	74	58.0
Pakistani	11,769	176	66.9
Roma	0	0	n/a
White & Asian	2,819	72	39.2
White & Black African	2,096	41	51.1
White & Black Caribbean	1,932	59	32.7
TOTAL	2,07,548	2,303	90.1

Red is more than the 90.1 average for ethnic minorities	Amber is more than the 28.4 average for white applicants

Table 6: applicant to hired ethnicity breakdown 2023.

When looking at the ethnic minority data set at a deeper level, there are some ethnic groups that have ratios that are larger (Red) and lower (amber) than the ethnic minority group average of 90:1. There is no case of an ethnic minority group having a ratio less than the white ratio of 28.4:1. The amber shows values over the white value of 28.4:1 (table 6).

There were no hires of Roma and Gypsy or Irish travellers this year. Indian applicants fared the worst, followed by Arab applicants with ratios of 182.9:1 and 104.9:1 respectively. The ethnic minority group that fairs the best (still worse than the white ratio) is white and black Caribbean. It is between 1.2 to 6.4 times more difficult for ethnic minority groups to be hired than their white counter parts. On average it is 3 times harder for them to be hired compared to the white applicants.

Applicants	Hired			
	2020	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
Female	21.2:1	26:1	16:1	24.8:1
Male	25.1:1	31:1	22:1	33.3:1
White	21.5:1	21:1	16:1	28.4:1
Ethnic Minority	51.1:1	49:1	50:1	90.1:1
Disabled	25:1	26:1	22:1	25.4:1

Table 7: hiring ratios 2020-2023.

For all categories data was collected for, the hiring ratio has increased in 2023 and so it is around two times harder to get a job overall this year for all groups (table 7 and figure 47). Ethnic minority group have seen the largest increase compared to last year. In 2022 there was an increase in hiring rates across the board post covid which has majorly slowed this year. This reflects the state of the economy and built environment. The cost-of-living crisis has meant that many people are also staying in their jobs for longer leading to less jobs on the market.
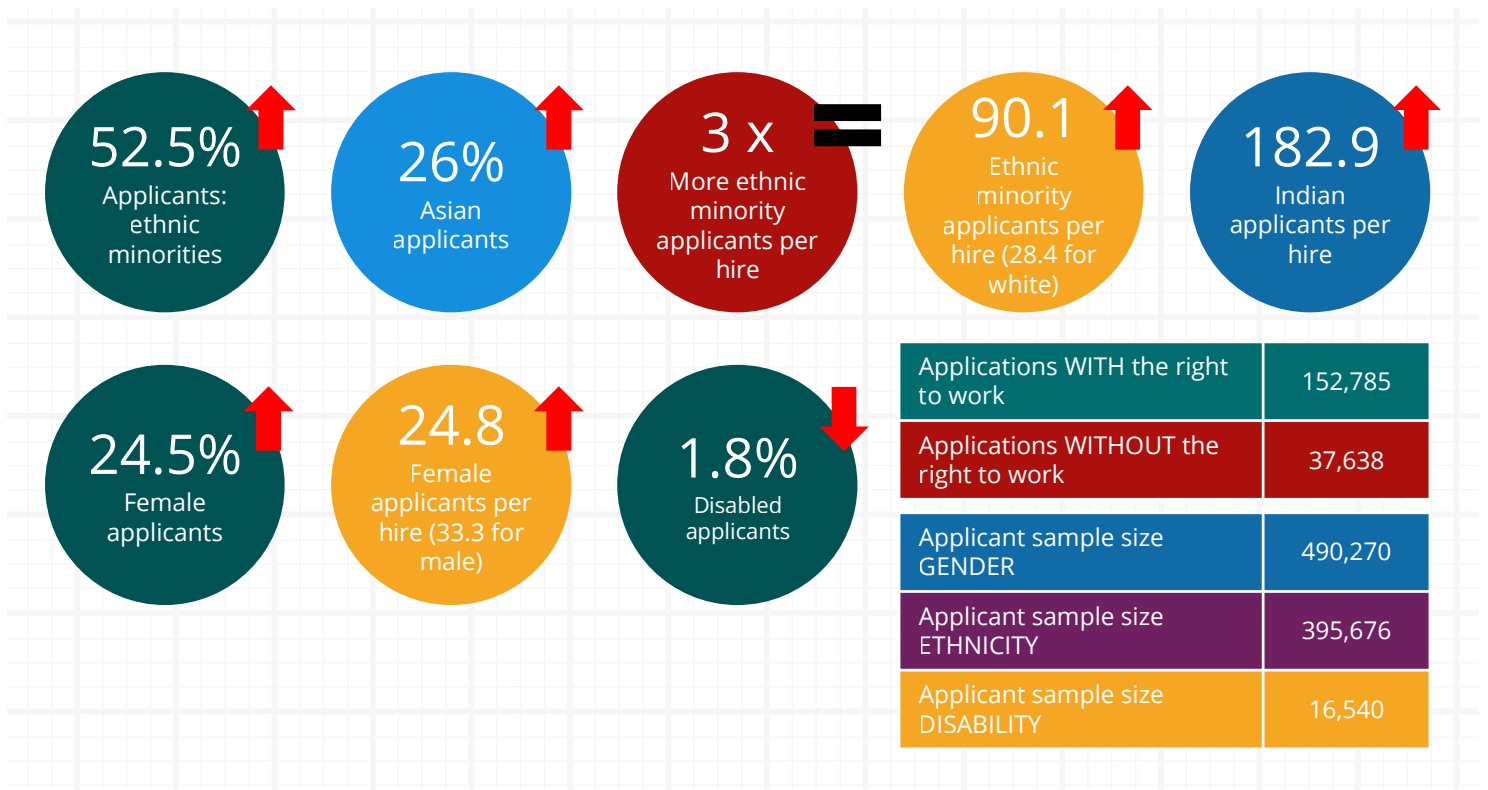

Applications WITH the right to work	152,785
Applications WITHOUT the right to work	37,638
Applicant sample size GENDER	490,270
Applicant sample size ETHNICITY	395,676
Applicant sample size DISABILITY	16,540

52.5% Applicants: ethnic minorities ↑
26% Asian applicants ↑
3 x More ethnic minority applicants per hire =
90.1 Ethnic minority applicants per hire (28.4 for white) ↑
182.9 Indian applicants per hire ↑
24.5% Female applicants ↑
24.8 Female applicants per hire (33.3 for male) ↑
1.8% Disabled applicants ↓

Figure 47: attraction and recruitment summary figures and key takeaways 2023.

Explore the FIR Programme's free resources:

Voluntary leavers

- **38,221 voluntary leavers** (166 organisations) in our industry in 2023 (19,645 from 41 organisations in 2022)
- 51 companies collect data on the destination of leavers
- Need to look for trends where we can see more voluntary leavers than % of sample in that group
  - More Voluntary leavers in the following groups: Ethnic minorities, Other religions, and the LGBTQIA+ community

Voluntary Leavers*	25.9% Women	25.9% Ethnic Minority Groups	25.9% Disability	25.9% LGBTQIA+	25.9% All Religions & Beliefs	25.9% Age 18 to 25	25.9% Age 50+
2023 Workforce	29.2%	13.6%	4.7%	2.6%	16.5%	10.9%	18.9%
2022 leavers	26%	17.7%	1.8%	5.1%	18.1%	7%	21.6%

Figure 48: voluntary leaver's protected characteristics summary for 2023, 2022 and ONS data.

This year the data size for voluntary leavers increased to just under 40,000 from 166 organisations (figure 48). This is a large increase in the number of organisations reporting their leavers data and mainly came from small SMEs. It is evident that for the LGBTQIA+ community, ethnic minorities, people with a religion or belief and people with a disability are being lost at a higher rate than their representation in the industry for 2023.

This year's benchmarks indicate that these are all areas that need to be improved as they are far below ONS' values. One way in which to do so is by addressing leavers so that talent remains within the industry. The large percentage of ethnic minorities, disabled and LGBTQIA+ leavers maybe due to cultural issues which we should explore further, as discussed in previous sections.

There has been a decrease in the percentage of under 25s and over 50s leaving the industry. Employees may be staying within the industry for longer due to the cost-of-living crisis and so people are waiting to retire. Men make up the majority of this age group as they tend to wait until later on in life to become part time workers. 47.9% of men that are part time employees are in the 50+ age group.

However, there has been an increase in the percentage of young leavers compared to last year and so there is a need to identify if they are leaving the industry for good or moving within. If they are changing careers, it would be useful to understand why and address these issues so that we can attract and retain this young talent.

This year, data was collected on whether organisations collect information on the destination of leavers; 51 organisations said that they do collect this information. The next step is to delve deeper into the destination of these leavers to see if they are leaving the industry and if so, why, so that we can address any issues highlighted.
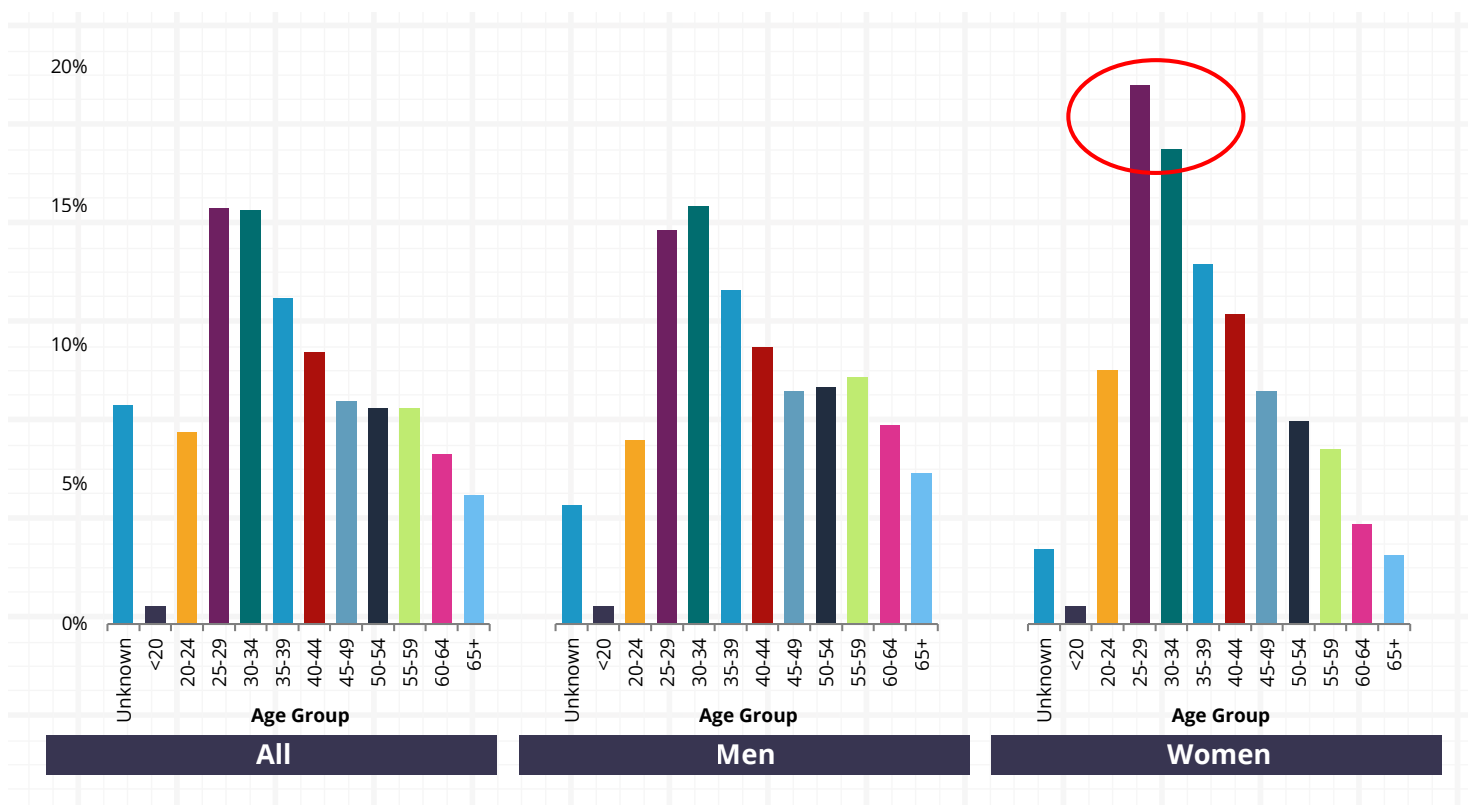

Figure 49: age profile of voluntary leavers for men and women 2023.

For men, women and the data set overall, there is a peak of leavers in the 25-34 age range (figure 49). However, the graph for men follows the pattern of leavers overall more closely. Whereas for women, there is a much stronger peak in the 25-34 age category and a sharp decline. This is around the time that women typically have children. Therefore, it would be valuable to further collect data on the destination of these women to see if they are leaving permanently and if so, why, so that this peak can be addressed.
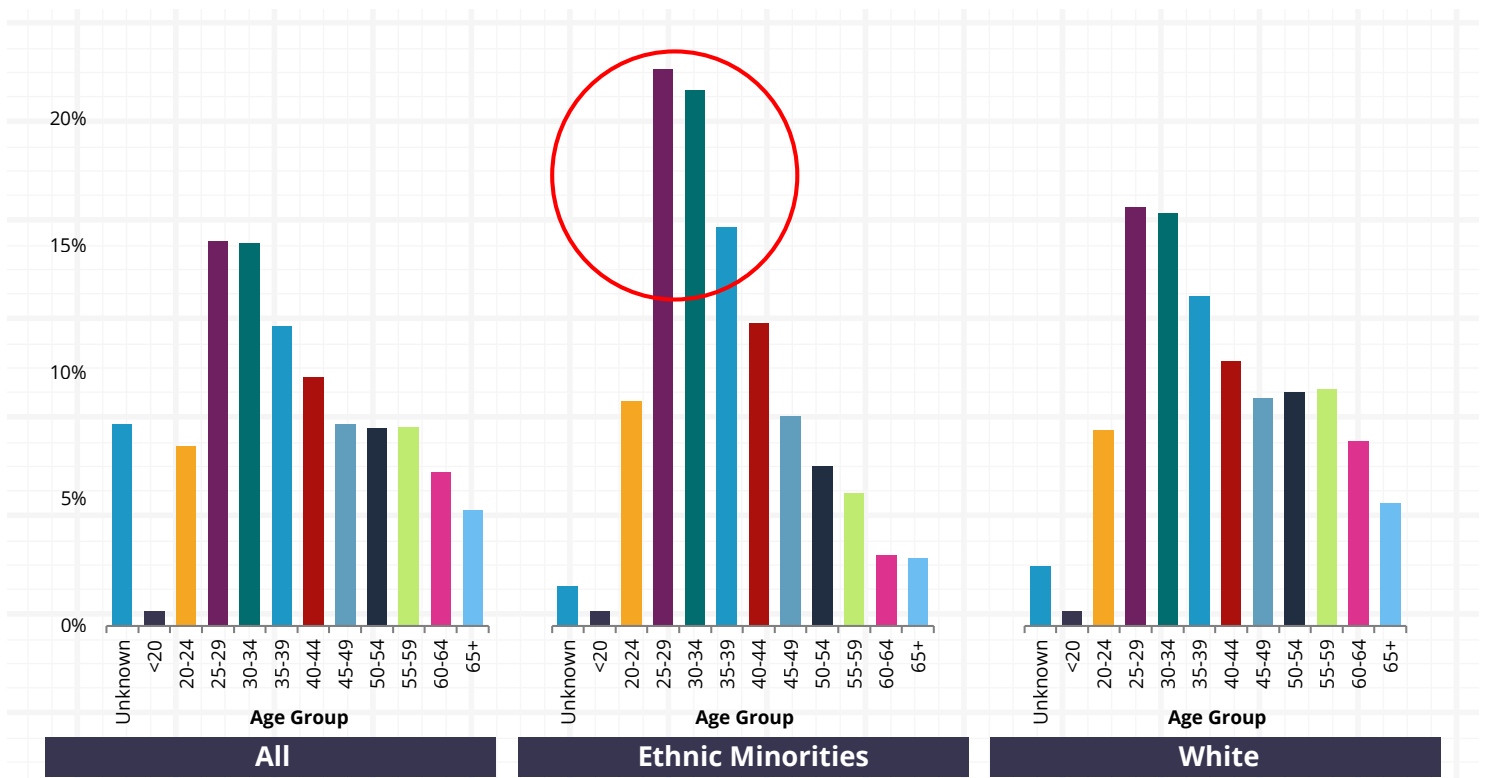
Figure 50: age profile of voluntary leavers for ethnicity minority groups and white employees 2023.

The age demographic of ethnic minority leavers mimics the gender data set when looking at ethnic minority leavers vs white and the data set overall. There is a large peak of the 25-34 age group for ethnic minority groups and the sharp decline that follows (figure 50). Whereas, for white and the overall data set, this peak is lower and there is a steady percentage split from 45-59. Within the age range of 25-34 the largest loss is from Indian (20.3%) followed by African (13.7%) and other Asian (12%). Indian and African had hiring ratio larger than the ethnic minority group average and so these groups are struggling to be hired and are also being lost at very high rates.

A focus in recent years has been attracting young talent from ethnic minority groups. If this talent is being attracted, it seems to be being lost again and so the issues that are causing these young people to leave need to be identified and addressed.

Ethnicity	Industry Benchmark	Voluntary Leavers	% Difference
African	17.4	15.7	1.7
Any other ethnic group	16.7	5.2	11.5
Arab	1.5	1.8	-0.3
Bangladeshi	3	4.3	-1.3
Caribbean	8.3	7	1.3
Chinese	3	4	-1
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0	0.4	-0.4
Indian	16.7	21	-4.3
Other Asian	12.1	9.5	2.6
Other Black	6.1	3.3	2.8
Other mixed ethnicity	0.8	11.6	-10.8
Pakistani	7.6	8	-0.4
White & Asian	2.3	2.9	-0.6
White & Black African	1.5	1.8	-0.3
White & Black Caribbean	3	3.6	-0.6
20% of voluntary leavers are from Ethnic Minority Groups			

Table 8: ethnic minority group voluntary leavers and industry benchmark breakdown 2023.

20% of leavers are from ethnic minority groups, when they make up only 13.6% of the workforce; ethnic minority groups are being lost at a larger % than are being employed. When looking at the ethnic minority groups broken down, it is clear to see that there has been a large increase in leavers in the groups shown in red, such as other mixed ethnicity employees, Bangladeshi and Chinese for example (table 8). There was a decline in some groups, such as any other ethnic group, African, other black and other Asian, which is positive. This data can be used to reach out to these groups that remain employed to ask them about their experiences to see if we can address this leavers issue.

Explore the FIR Programme's free resources:

CORPORATE LEAVERS SURVEY

Conclusion and recommendations

There has been a positive uptake in diversity reporting within the built environment in 2023. Organisations from a range of sectors and sizes see the value in collecting and reporting their data so industry benchmarks can be formed and year on year progress can be tracked.

The key benchmarks have seen progress in some areas, such as the percentage of women, LGBTQIA+ representation, people with disabilities, under 25s, and people with a religion or beliefs. Although these have all seen increases of various sizes, all remain below the ONS' values and so remain target areas for improvement. Ethnic minority group representation also saw decline of 0.1%, a step in the wrong direction.

Further engagement with leavers is key to try to increase these benchmarks. Information on where leavers are going and why they are leaving is key to addressing the loss of key talent from the industry. Efforts have been focused on attracting talent previously but the data in this report shows that attraction is not always the issue. In fact, the loss of talent may be preventing the benchmark values from increasing in many cases, as some groups are leaving the industry faster than they are entering it. This being said, it is clear that ethnic minority groups also experience blocks in the recruitment process as they find it much more difficult to enter the workforce in the first place and are also leaving at a higher rate than they represent.

Efforts should also be focused on improving data collection and reporting as there are large amounts of unknowns in the data set, particularly in the disability and sexual orientation categories. These unknowns may be skewing the data and are impacting industry transparency and the benchmark values. Tier 3, homebuilding, and gas are key areas for this engagement to improve this data as much of the data was lacking. Educational resources, knowledge and shared experiences would help this group to improve their data collection and key indicators. Facilities management and rail are two sectors that continuously performed well, and so engaging with them, with the lens of what can the industry learn from them, would be beneficial. Any insights gained should be shared so that the industry can continue to work towards a more inclusive environment that mimics the UK population.

Reporting your organisation's data

You can report your organisational data annually for FREE between March and September each year using this link. The annual industry benchmarks are presented and released at the annual benchmarking event held in December. This year's recording can be found here: 2023 benchmarking conference recording

Benefits of reporting:

- Actionable insights: Year on year tracking

- Standardised diversity measuring: implement best practice reporting, support transparency and accountability

- Industry and ONS benchmarks

- Comprehensive data analysis: make data driven decisions

- Reporting is FREE

- Enhanced business performance: organisations in the top quartile for ethnic and cultural diversity in corporate leadership outperform those in the fourth quartile by 36% in profitability.

For reporting guidance please use this link to access our support site. The site contains instructional videos, template documents and the full list of metrics available for download.

For organisations who would like to engage with their supply chain and/or would like further insight into their own data in relation to ONS and the industry please see the section below.

Explore your supply chain's workforce diversity

As regulations and client expectations continue to move towards greater transparency of performance, understanding and leveraging diversity metrics is crucial to maintain a competitive advantage in everything ranging from recruiting the best talent in the industry to winning tenders. In addition, as leaders within the built environment, the responsibility falls upon us all to create a more diverse and inclusive industry, strengthening our sector for years to come.

Our tool has the flexibility to be leveraged according to your needs:

- **FREE Diversity Survey:** Participate in the survey for free and provide your diversity metrics. You will be given access to an interactive dashboard where you can analyse the data at your convenience. Gain an increased understanding of your ED&I performance while saving valuable time and money on data aggregation, ultimately facilitating data-backed decision-making.

  - [Sign up](#) **to participate for free and submit your internal diversity metrics!**

- **£3,995 Tailored Reports and Action Plans:** Leverage our team´s expertise built over 20 years of consulting for leading organisations within the built environment to receive bespoke data analysis reports, benchmarking your internal performance to the industry and suggesting action plans to address identified disparities. Improve your visibility over your competitor's performance and identify mechanisms to carve an advantage over your peers.

  - [Book a meeting](#) **here to receive your personalised data analysis report.**

- **£9,995 Supply Chain Insights and Benchmarking:** Extend the survey to your suppliers to gain increased visibility over your suppliers' diversity metrics. Your suppliers will receive free access to their own dashboard, as well as extended support through free webinars and resources to help them get the most out of their metrics. Increase supplier engagement to facilitate strategy implementation across your supply chain, strengthening your relationships and improving supplier selection and decision-making. Save over 700 hours on data collection, aggregation, and analysis.

  - [Book a meeting](#) **to audit your supply chain diversity performance, and join ranks with Morgan Sindall, National Highways and HS2.**

[Contact our team](#) to learn more about your E&I performance and find out more about the package that best suits your needs.

About the FIR Programme:

The Fairness, Inclusion and Respect (FIR) Programme is an industry-wide initiative delivered by the Supply Chain Sustainability School that aims to make workplaces better for everyone. It provides free industry-endorsed training, workshops, resources and guidance materials along with a tailored Ambassador program and other initiatives to support businesses to be more innovative and profitable by addressing workplace culture challenges and helping to attract and retain people. Learn more: supplychainschool.co.uk/fir

Sustainability Tool
diversity survey

Get in touch

For more information on the Diversity Survey, contact Max via email at
Max.Lajtha@actionsustainability.com or [book a free meeting](#).