

## **ANNUAL UPDATE ON EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION 2023**

### **1. Background**

In March 2022, Board approved the [EDI Policy](#) of North Star. Our ambitions to be a fair and inclusive landlord and employer go beyond complying with regulation and legislation. Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace can enhance productivity, innovation, collaboration, and success. The greater the variety of thinking, and the more supported people feel, the better the outcomes.

The Leading and Growing Strategy to 2026 was approved in March 2023 and sets out North Stars ambition to be equitable, diverse, and inclusive. To listen and learn from the lived experience of people from diverse backgrounds. To proactively tackle and prevent any form of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation. North Star aims to have a workforce and Board that broadly reflects the diversity of the communities it serves and takes positive action to address under-representation.

Addressing issues of under representation is evolutionary. To tackle inequality, actions need to be well planned, strategic, sustainable, and taken seriously. For North Star this is a strategic priority.

### **2. Data and what it is telling us**

#### Staff and Board

Board and Staff data was collected in May 2023. Demographic surveys were completed by 100% of Board and 91% of Staff. The arising data is shown as a percentage of those responding.

#### Customers

Improving the quality of our customer data is a priority. We want to ensure that our services are inclusive, accessible, meet the needs of customers. and treats them fairly. Building greater understanding about the experience of customers is critical to ensure we treat people fairly. We will focus on working with our customers to understand:

- The barriers encountered in accessing quality affordable housing. Some work has taken place, but we need to do more.
- Whether there is equality of access to our properties and services.
- If customers with protected characteristics experience disadvantage or dissatisfaction when compared to our general customer population.

## Job applicants

We recruited 19 vacancies during the year. The number of vacancies, and the functions they arose in are shown below

Finance	Supported Housing	Customer Services/Housing	Peoples Services	Data and Digital	Technical Services
1	11	2	2	2	1

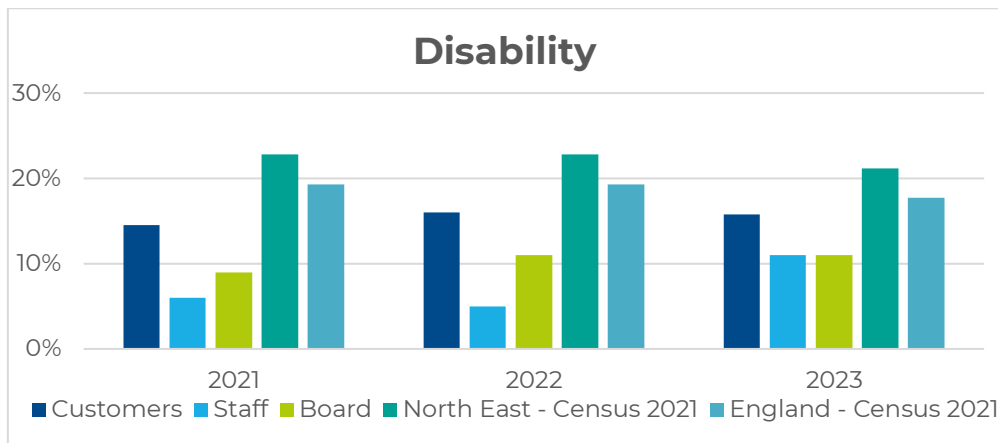
All applicants are asked to provide demographic information. An objective for the 2022/23 year was to improve the recording and analysis of this data.

Stage of recruitment	Ethnicity		Age				Sex		Disability	Sexuality		
	White	Minority Ethnic	< 24	25-34	35-44	>45	M	F		Gay	Bi-Sexual	Hetro-sexual
Application	55%	41%	11%	41%	27%	20%	37%	62%	3.82%	3%	3%	88%
Interviewed	82%	12%	7%	36%	27%	26%	21%	79%	4.94%	4%	4%	82%
Offered a job	90%	10%	5%	35%	30%	30%	15%	85%	10%	-	5%	85%

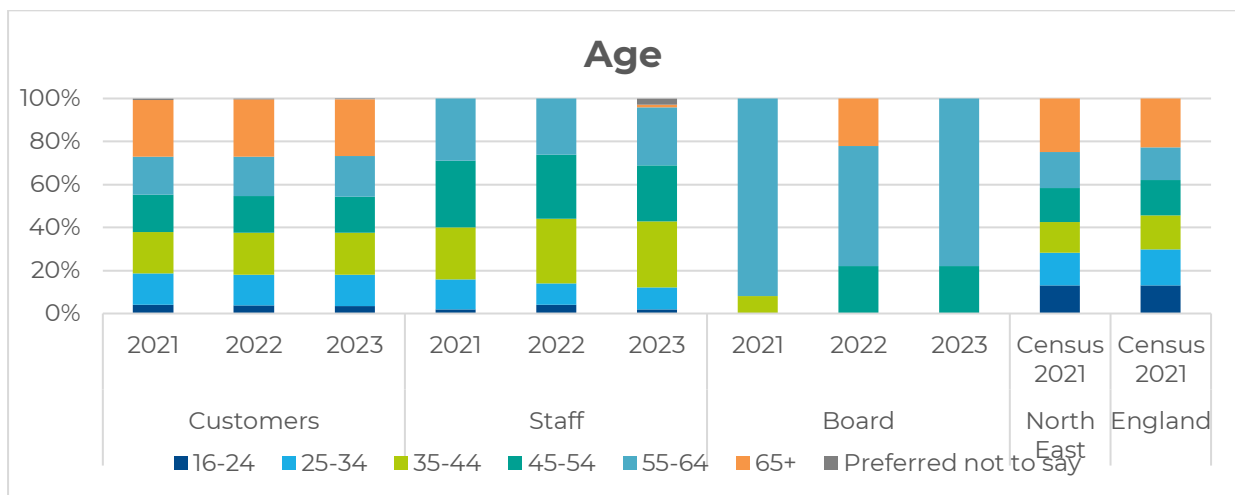
Where % does not equate to 100 this is because candidates stated that they preferred not to answer, or simply left the question unanswered

More work is required to understand the data. This is a priority for the 2023/24 year. The initial analysis shows:

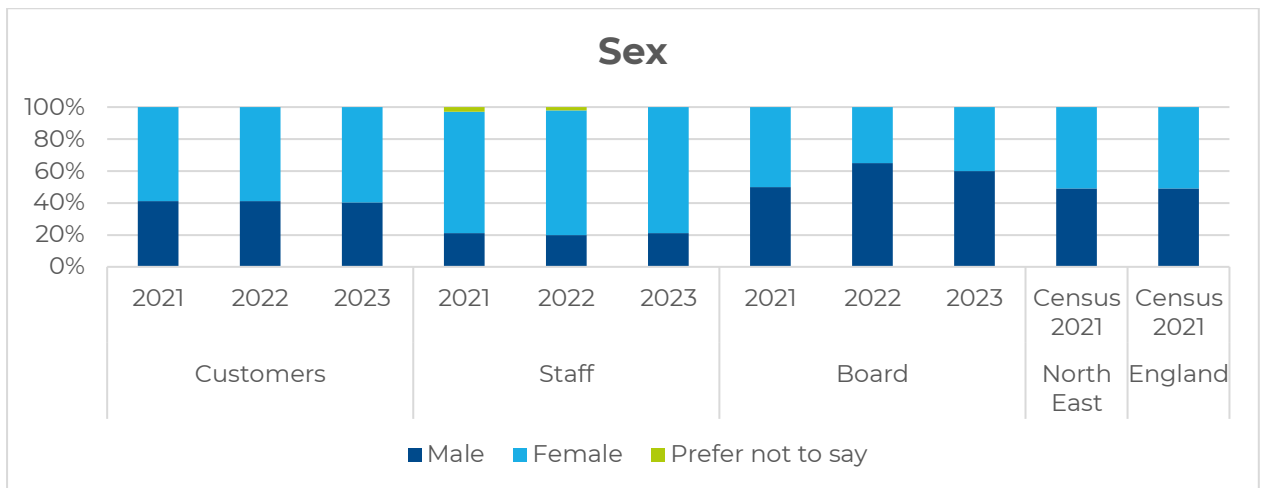
- At application stage, there is a diverse pool of candidates.
- Of the new starters:
  - The majority are white, heterosexual, women
  - 10% state that they are minority ethnic (workforce target of 8%)
  - 10% state that they have a disability (workforce target of 8%)
  - 35% are aged 25-34
- Over 40% of applicants describe themselves as minority ethnic, and only 12% of interviewees.
- Candidates who have a disability are under-represented at application stage. However, success at interview stage is relatively high



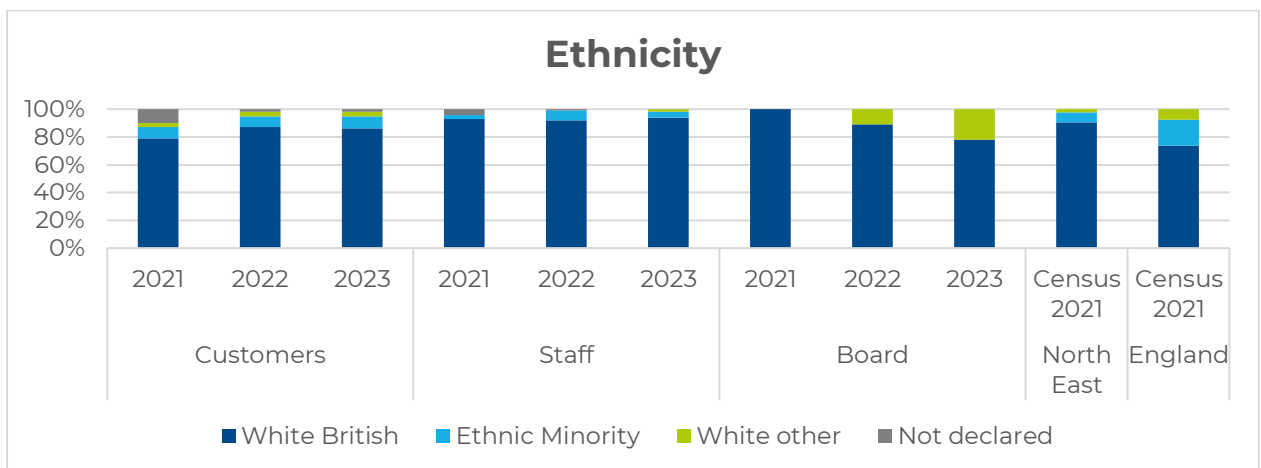
- There are 11% of Staff who state that they have a disability. This is a significant increase from 5% last year. The main reasons for disability are Diabetes, Depression and Mobility.
- At Board level, this has remained at 11%
- The workforce target of 8%, has been met. We propose to increase the target so that we take another incremental step to become representative of the demography of England (18%)
- 14% of Customers have stated they have a disability which is a marginal reduction from last year. The main disabilities disclosed are mobility, mental ill health, and unseen disability such as diabetes.
- We let 18% of properties to households with a disability, a 7% increase on last year.



- The age profile of the Staff team has remained broadly the same. It is a strategic priority to increase the numbers of younger people joining North Star
- The majority of Board members are aged 55-64. Board may wish to consider the age demographic when recruiting new members.
- The age profile of Customers is broadly as at 2021/22. There is an increase in Tenants aged 76-90, consistent with the Census. Further engagement with Customers is needed to determine how we co-design services to meet the needs of an ageing population.
- The letting of homes increased to 25-34 year olds (+6%) and 65+ (+2%)



- At a Board level, the ratio has changed to a 60/40 male to female. This is due to Board turnover and targeted recruitment
- The Staff team continues to be under representative of the male population.
- The differential is more obvious at the Team Leader level and below. Benchmarking highlights that organisations that deliver its repairs service using an in-house team, employ more men, and therefore as a whole tend to have more male staff.
- We have been mindful of under representation when recruiting, using more images of male Staff in promotional material. We have had some success and recruited our first male worker into a supported housing service for several years.

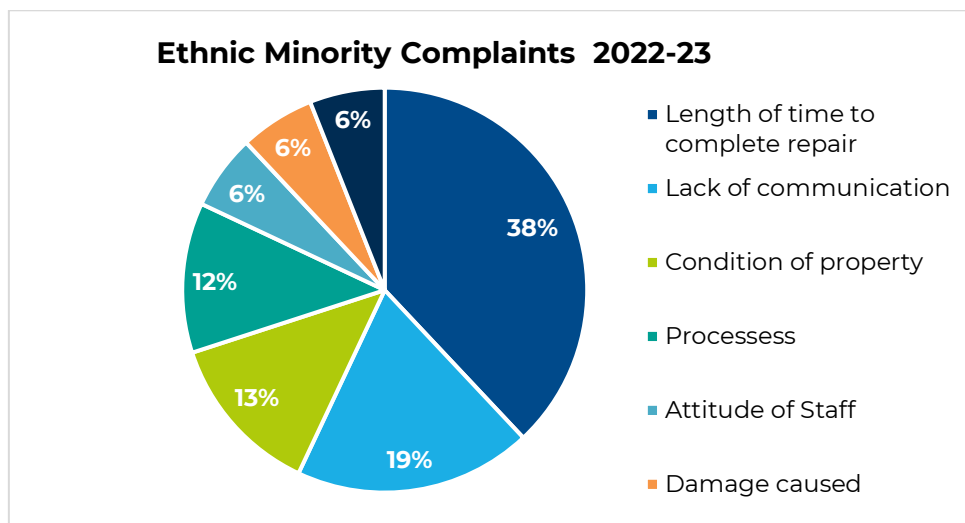
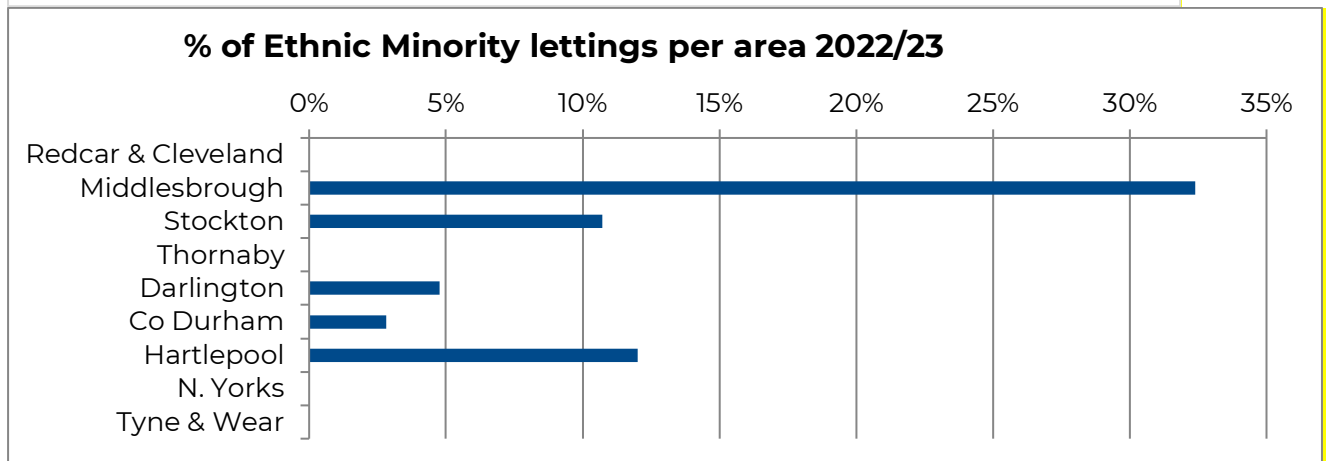
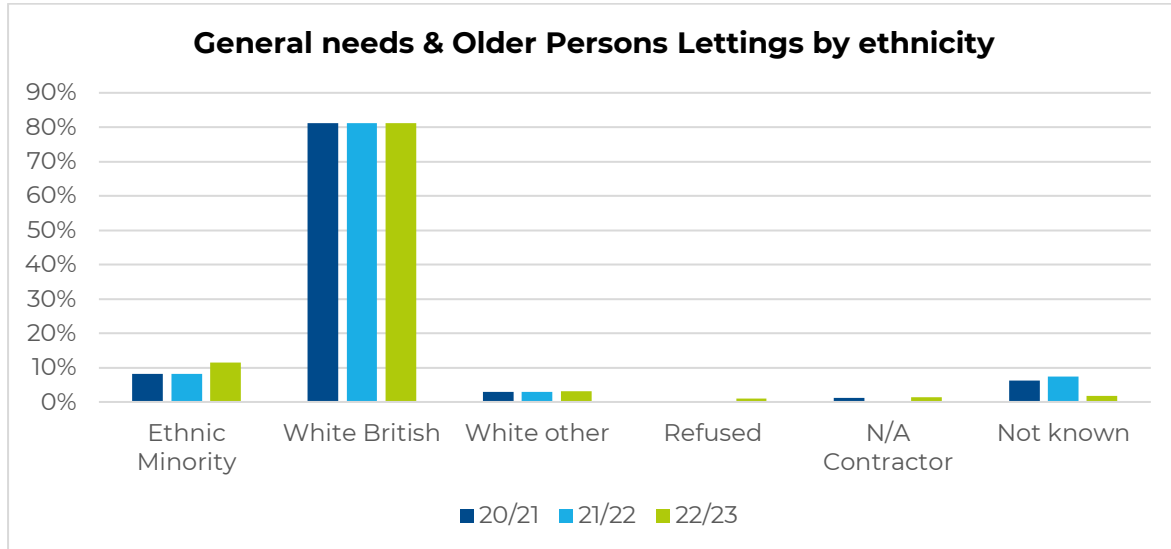


#### Staff and Board

- Board approved an 8% workforce target. We have not achieved this. However, 10% of new Staff classified themselves as minority ethnic. We propose to retain the workforce target.
- North Star, in partnership with other local Housing Associations, and The Housing Diversity Network developed the North-East Board Diversity Programme. We appointed four trainees; all are female and three describe themselves as minority ethnic. Their two-year placement with North Star ends in 2023 and next steps are being considered by Board in 2023

- The Chair of North Star has signed up for The Chairs' Challenge. Developed by The NHF this is a public commitment to begin – or further develop – a journey to create an inclusive environment for all. Work will begin with a Board workshop later in the year.

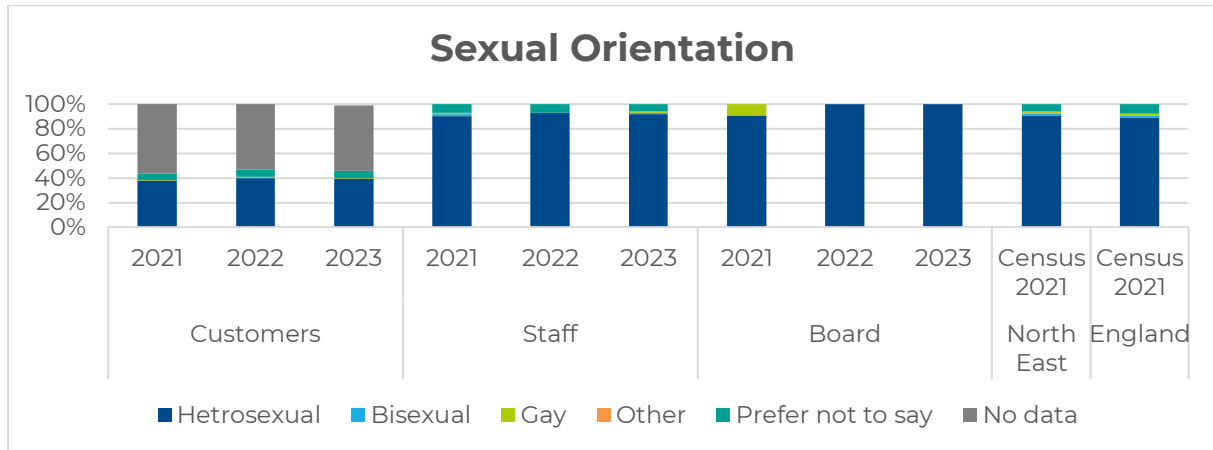
Customers



- Ethnicity data is held on 98% of Tenants and 9% identify as minority ethnic

- Of involved Tenants, 12% are from minority ethnic households.
- We let 12% of properties to minority ethnic household's vs a target of 10%
- Complaints remain in comparatively small numbers with 16 received. The primary causes for complaint remain consistent with the wider tenant population.

### **Sexual Orientation**



- Currently 100% of Board state that they are heterosexual.
- For Staff, 5% of new starters state that they are LBGTQ.
- The information for customers is unreliable. This information has not been routinely collected from customers since 2018.

<b>Progress against 2022/23 Objectives</b>	
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Carry out peer benchmarking on the male to female ratio of Staff.	Completed- Detail in Section Three
Increase the level of Staff who have a disability from 5% to 8%	The target in relation to increasing the levels of Staff who have a disability has been achieved
Increase the level of ethnic minority Staff from 6% to 8%	The target for increasing the level of ethnic minority Staff has not been met. A target for 2023/24 is proposed
Review the minority ethnic apprenticeship scheme to assess its viability	Completed-Positive action to recruit young, minority ethnic people will continue.
Review the demographic questionnaires for Staff, Board, Customers to ensure that: we meet best practice,	Completed for Staff and Board. Not completed for Customers
Analyse recruitment data to identify issues of under representation or inequality.	Completed-Detail in Section Three
Further develop accurate insight on the experiences of diverse customer groups to shape our approach.	Not complete - Carried forward to 2023/24
Carry out further community engagement to understand the different needs of Customers and influence the services provided by North Star.	Not complete – Initial engagement with households in Middlesbrough was completed, identifying some

**Objectives for 2023/24**

Addressing issues of under representation is evolutionary. To tackle inequality, actions need to be well planned, strategic, sustainable, and taken seriously. For North Star this is a strategic priority. Board has approved the following objectives:

Staff and Board

- Increase levels of Staff that have a disability to 13.5%.
- Increase levels of ethnic minority Staff to 8%
- Conduct further analysis of minority ethnic job applications to understand attrition rates.
- Deliver training on Unconscious bias, Anti racism, and Neuro diversity

Customers

- Let 12% of homes to minority ethnic households
- Review the data collected on Customers to ensure it is meaningful and helps to identify areas of under representation or inequality.
- Identify the barriers that may be encountered in accessing quality affordable housing.
- Assess the equality of access to our properties
- Identify whether Customers with protected characteristics are disadvantaged, or less satisfied when compared to the overall customer base