



# Barnet Homes

## Shape of our Workforce

### 1) Introduction

Diversity, the individual differences in who we are, where we are from and what we believe, impact on people in many different ways. This impact is often positive, through the different skills and knowledge diversity brings to communities and organisation. However, adverse impact can also be felt through experiences of harassment, discrimination and through barriers in employment and accessing services.

Providing a fair and equal service to all our residents is central to living our vision of delivering great service at great value that makes a positive difference to people, homes and communities. Equality and diversity must start from inside Barnet Homes. We have a good idea of the communities we serve. In order for us to understand the needs of these communities and ensure they are accounted for in shaping services, it is important that the people we employ represent these communities. This demonstrates to customers and external stakeholders that we are committed to equality and that providing a fair and equal service to all our residents is a priority.

Furthermore, for an organisation to truly offer the same opportunities to all its employees and to ensure issues affecting different groups are considered in all activities across the organisation, there should be a fair representation of all groups at each level – staff, management and board alike.

This report focuses on analysing the profile of our workforce against that of our tenants and the wider Barnet population.

The following graphs compare different levels of staff with the profile of our board and tenants. Groups for comparison are defined in the table below:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Definition of Group</b>	<b>Number in Group</b>
Staff	Non- management staff earning below £36,000	234
Management	Middle managers and those earning above £36,000 excluding SMT and Exec	38
SMT & Exec	Senior management and executive team	10
Board	Barnet Homes is managed by a board made up of council nominees, residents and independent members.	9
Tenants	Profile for all active tenant accounts with diversity data at June 2011	10,733
Barnet	Covers the whole population of Barnet based on 2001 census data	314,564

We want our workforce to be representative of the communities we serve. Those in social housing are often the most vulnerable in society therefore we do not expect our employee profile to exactly match that of our residents but our objective is to have fair representation at each level across Barnet Homes. For example, two thirds of our tenants are female, which is significantly higher than the borough of Barnet female population of 52%. This is due to a number of reasons, for example, women are more likely to be single parents or carers and therefore more likely to need affordable housing. However, we would not expect two thirds of our employees to be women but a 50% representation of women at staff, management and senior management level would ensure issues affecting women were taken into consideration from this group’s perspective at all levels. Again around 30% of our tenants are disabled, which is significantly higher than the borough of Barnet with a disabled population of 15%. A good representation of disabled employees would be closer to that of Barnet’s population and to ensure this is true at all levels throughout the organisation.

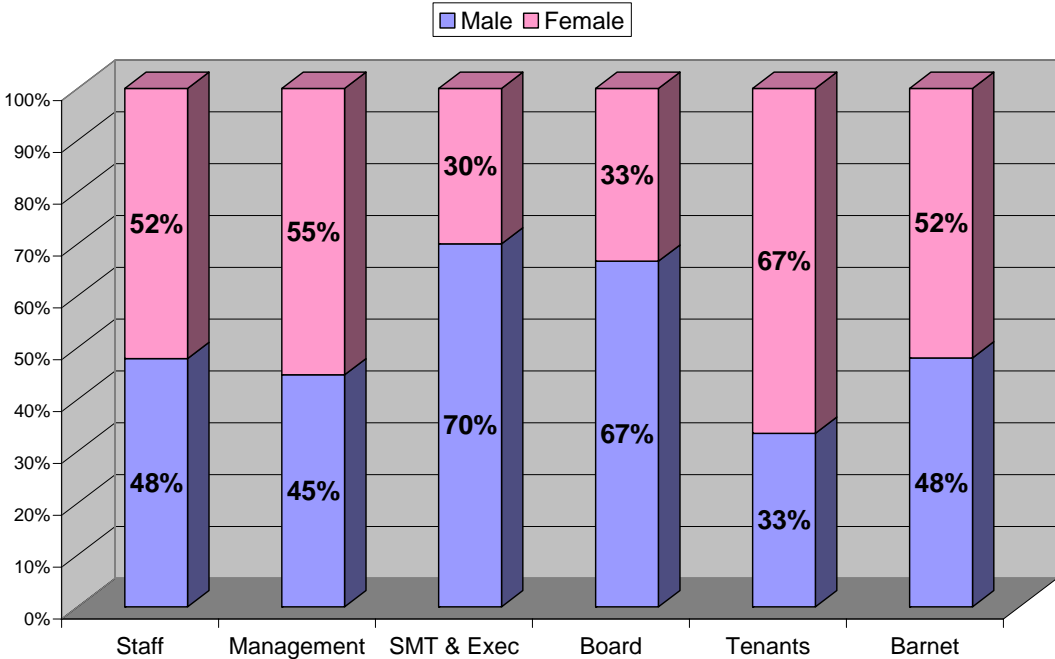
## 2) Business Case

There is a strong business case for diversifying our staff profile and increasing under represented groups at all levels across the organisation:

- accessing a pool of talent we have so far overlooked and attracting a wider range of applicants for vacancies
- improving Barnet Homes image as an inclusive and equal organisation
- developing a more open culture where staff are able to be themselves increases productivity and motivation of staff
- using the experience and knowledge of staff from protected characteristics will enable better understanding of the needs of our residents allowing us to target resources and provide better services, while being more efficient and improving satisfaction

## 3) Gender

Chart 1: Proportion of male and female employees, tenants and in the wider borough of Barnet



Two thirds of Barnet Homes tenants are female. 52% of non-management staff are female, which is in line with the profile of Barnet. Women are well represented at management level, but only 30% of our senior management and executive team and 33% of our Board are female.

It is recognised across all sectors that although women have come a long way in achieving equality in the workplace, they are still poorly represented in senior management and board positions. The above chart shows that Barnet Homes is no exception. Having children, taking maternity leave and being more likely to work part time puts women at a disadvantage when competing for jobs. Barnet Homes has a number of policies in place to support parents, such as flexible working and the possibility of job sharing. Additional probable barriers preventing women from progressing could be that in general women are less confident and less likely to apply for promotion if they do not meet 100% of the job specification. To address this Barnet Homes is putting mentoring schemes in place for all staff to build confidence, develop and support employees to prepare them for promotion. We will also analyse gender profile of applicants and reasons for applicants being unsuccessful to help us put further actions in place.

**4) Ethnicity**

*Chart 2: Proportion of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and white employees, tenants and population of Barnet*

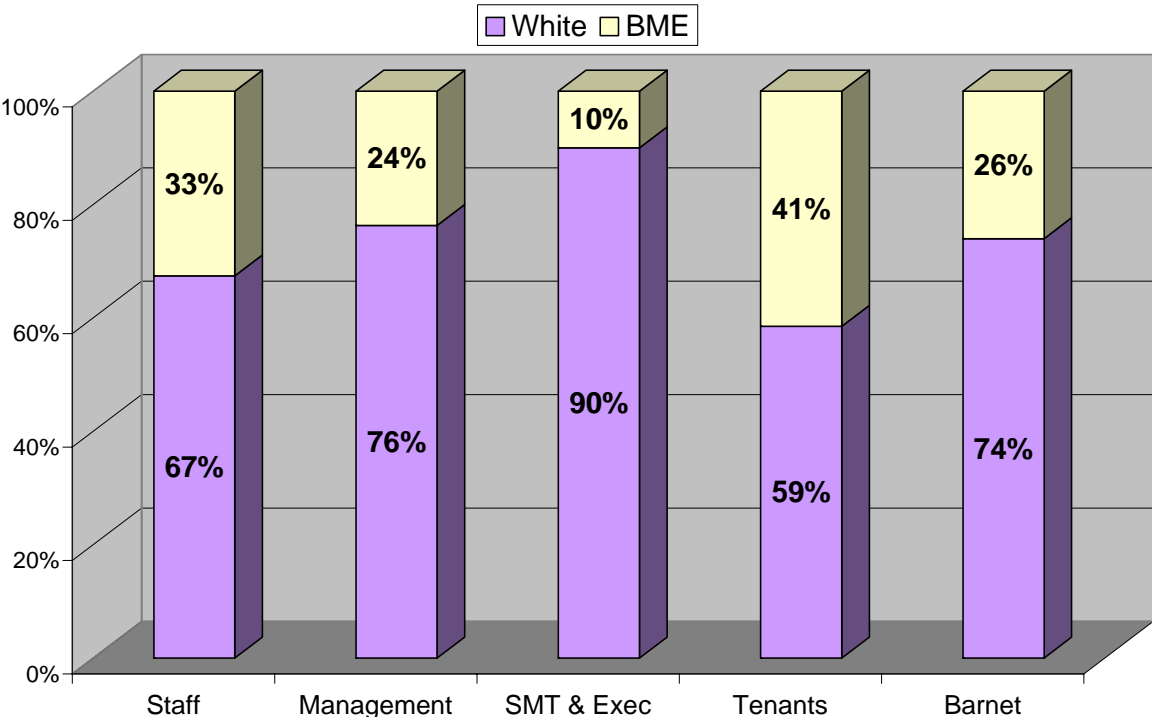
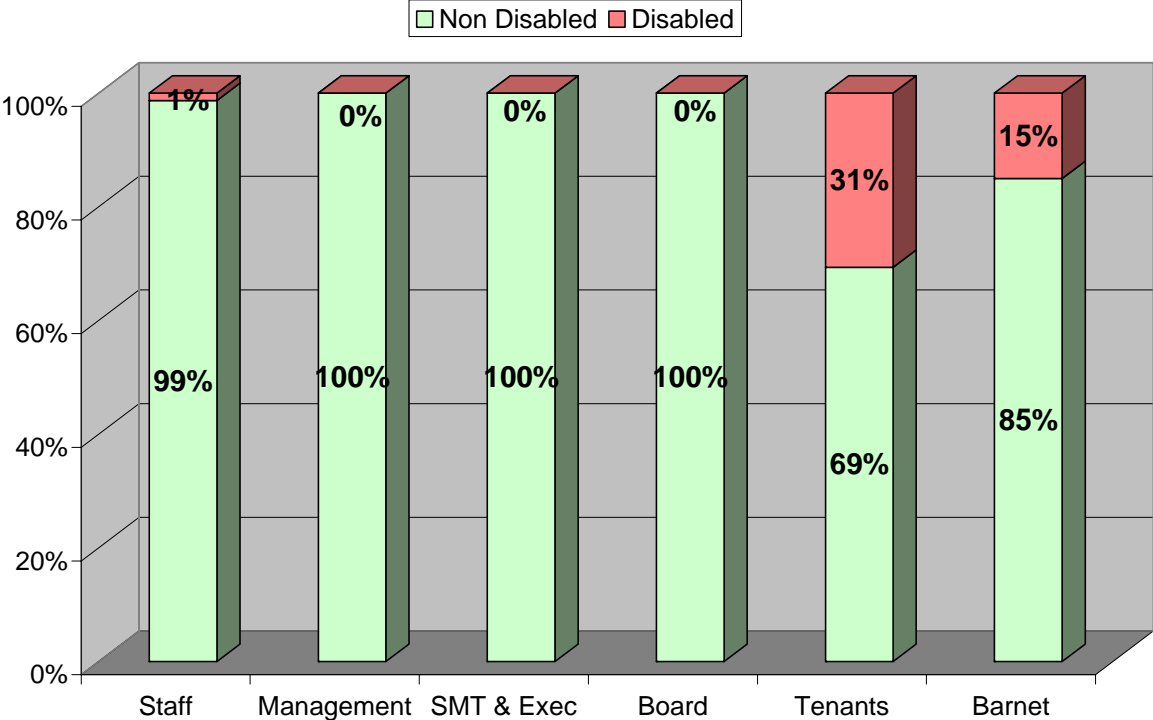


Chart 2 shows that at 33%, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups are well represented at non-management staff level. Although lower than our overall tenant profile of 41% BME, this is higher than the borough of Barnet as a whole. BME

groups are well represented at management level at 24%, but this drops to 10% at senior and executive level. We are awaiting ethnicity profiling data from Board members to complete the comparison. As SMT and Exec group have only ten people and a relatively low turnover rate, it is difficult to put in place short term actions to balance this underrepresentation. However it is hoped that by offering mentoring to all employees those from BME groups that wish to use this scheme will be further developed and ready to step up to the next level when the opportunity arises. We will also analyse ethnicity profile of applicants and reasons for applicants being unsuccessful to help us put further actions in place.

**5) Disability**

*Chart 3: Proportion of disabled and non-disabled employees, tenants and population of Barnet*



The above chart shows that people with disabilities are very poorly represented within Barnet Homes workforce with only 1% of staff declaring a disability and no representation at management, senior management level or board. There may be underlying reasons for disability disclosure being so low. For example, some staff may have felt it would have gone against their application if they revealed a disability when applying for their job, or some employees may feel uncomfortable disclosing certain disabilities, such as mental health conditions, for fear of how people will treat

them. Barnet Homes wants to cultivate a culture that is positive and open about all disabilities, supporting any such individuals and creating an environment where they feel they can share such issues. On the other hand our tenants are much more likely to disclose any disability they may have as this may increase their likelihood of being housed. 30% of our main tenants are disabled, but the proportion of households with at least one disabled family member is much higher.

We recognise we have a great deal of work to do in increasing the number of disabled people at all levels of the organisation. Disabled employees are recorded as having lower sickness, higher retention rates and higher productivity than non-disabled employees. Tapping into this talent pool would also allow us to understand the needs and challenges of many of our residents.

To gain a true picture of the disability profile of our workforce we will be asking staff to re-submit their diversity profile information while at the same time publicising what is considered to be a disability and how we can offer support. Once we have an accurate picture we will be better placed to identify additional support needed for current employees, including opportunities for them to progress, as well as putting in place a strategy to attract more disabled candidates.

Barnet Homes have been awarded the “two ticks – positive about disabled people” symbol which means we are committed to:

- interviewing all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and to consider them on their abilities
- discussing with disabled employees, at any time but at least once a year, what both parties can do to make sure disabled employees can develop and use their abilities
- making every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment
- taking action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make these commitments work
- reviewing these commitments each year and assess what has been achieved, plan ways to improve on them and let employees and Jobcentre Plus know about progress and future plans.

At present we are recruiting a new board member and are ensuring that all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria are being shortlisted for interview.

**6) Sexual orientation**

Barnet Homes has very little data on the sexuality of our residents, however Stonewall estimates that 6% of the UK population are lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB), and suggests that this proportion is even higher in urban areas such as Barnet. This equates to at least 900 of our residents. Great care must be taken when monitoring for sexual orientation due to public attitude and discrimination experienced by the LGB community in recent history. However, it is important that we strive to collect this information sensitively from our staff and residents to better understand the needs of these groups.

*Chart 4: Sexual orientation of our workforce*

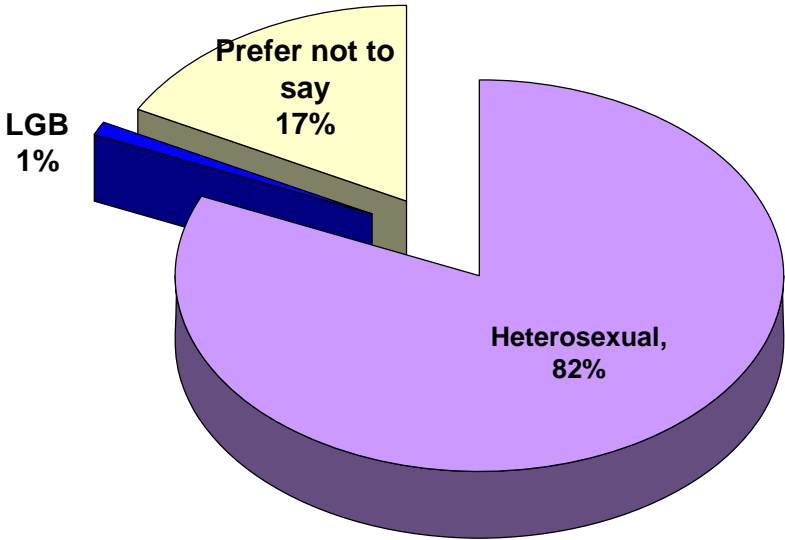


Chart 4 shows that only 1% of our workforce have disclosed their sexual orientation as lesbian, gay or bisexual, which is significantly below the national 6%. There are a number of reasons why those who are LGB may not feel comfortable disclosing this information: they may not have come out, they may fear harassment and discrimination, or they may feel it is not the organisation’s business.

The starting point for Barnet Homes providing a service that is genuinely inclusive of LGB customers is the creation of an organisational culture that is open to the needs of LGB staff, customers and communities. This means developing an employee profile that is representative of the LGB customers it serves. The challenge for Barnet Homes is to cultivate a culture that is open about addressing and supporting LGB issues. Being visible in championing LGB matters will attract more applicants from these communities, diversifying and expanding our talent pool, and should encourage trust in current LGB employees who will feel more comfortable being

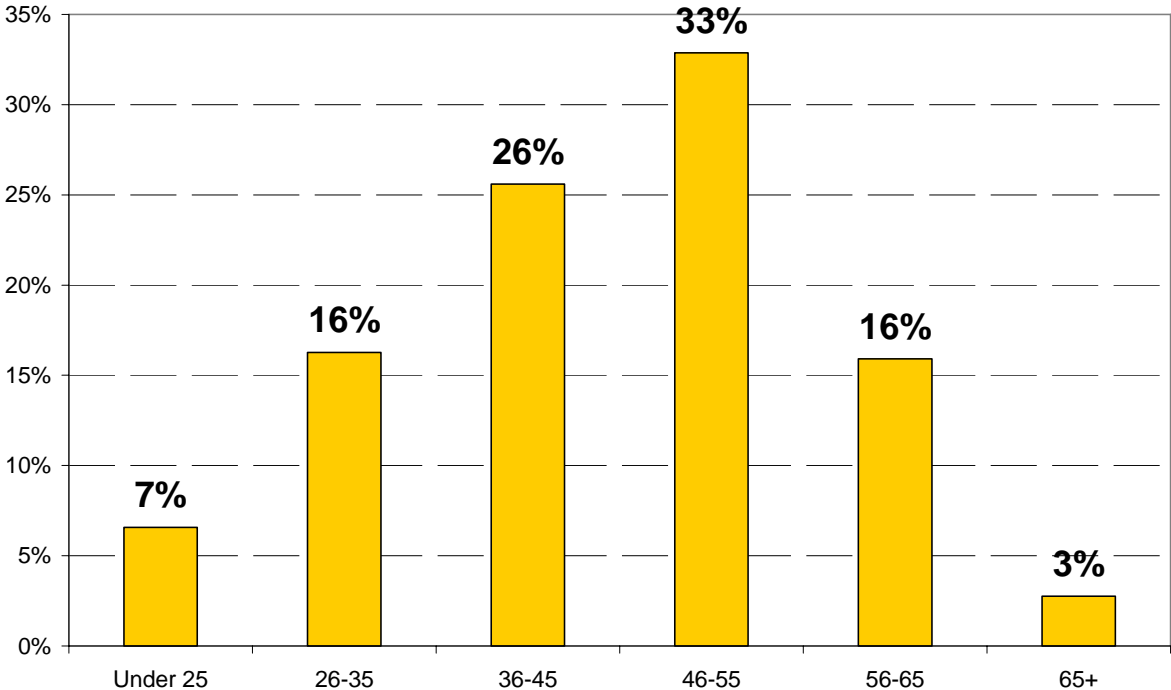
themselves in the workplace. This will put us in a much better position to engage with our LGB customers and help us meet their needs in service design and delivery.

To demonstrate our commitment, we will take part in Stonewall’s annual benchmarking exercise, “The Workplace Equality Index”. This index measures efforts to tackle discrimination and promote inclusion for lesbian, gay and bisexual employees, rating organisations in order of success in this area. This will give Barnet Homes a base position for LGB equality issues which we can build and improve upon.

The Barnet Homes census will go out to all tenants to update all diversity data including sexuality. We hope that this will give us an accurate picture of who our tenants are and allow further comparison in this area.

**7) Age**

*Chart 5: Age of our workforce*



We have a good balance of ages across our workforce. We want to ensure that staff are given learning and development opportunities regardless of age and that staff are not judged on age but experience, knowledge and ability. Barnet Homes operate a Fair Retirement Policy where staff can request to stay on after the retirement age of 65. The Managing Change policy sets out the process to be followed when

considering significant organisational change. This policy is due to be impact assessed to ensure it does not disadvantage employees of any particular age group, in particular our older employees.

**8) Faith**

Barnet Homes staff and tenants follow a wide range of religions and belief systems (including no belief).

<b>Faith</b>	<b>Tenants</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Faith</b>	<b>Tenants</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Agnostic	0.1%	0.4%	Jewish	1.7%	0.4%
Atheist	0.3%	0.4%	Muslim	14.9%	4.4%
Buddhist	0.7%	1.5%	Other	5.6%	4.8%
Christian	57.2%	66.3%	Sikh	0.1%	0.0%
Hindu	2.9%	3.7%	No Religion	16.5%	17.8%
Jain	0.0%	0.4%			

We want to be flexible to the religious practices and cultural observations of our staff and endeavour to give time off for cultural events wherever possible. We have a dedicated prayer room in our office to allow staff space to carry out religious practices at work.

In addition we want our staff to be aware and sensitive to the religious and cultural beliefs and practices of our residents. All staff receive equality and diversity and cultural awareness training and we do our best to plan customer events to ensure as many people have the opportunity to participate as possible.

Following Christianity, Islam is the most common religion of our resident. 14.9% of our tenants define themselves as Muslim compared with only 4.4% of staff. There is significant cross over between ethnic minorities and Muslims with 87% of Muslim tenants being from ethnic minorities. Our tenants are more likely to be from ethnic minorities than residents of the wider borough therefore are more likely to be Muslim. (see section 4 above).

**9) Gender Reassignment**

Gender reassignment refers to the process of transitioning from the gender assigned at birth to the gender the person identifies with regardless of whether hormone therapy has taken place. Transgender describes people whose gender identify or expression differs from their birth sex. There is little known data on transgender

communities, however Press for Change estimates that 1 in 11,500 people are transsexual (a person who wants to or who has changed their physical sex). Due to very small numbers of this group and the sensitivity around collecting such information, Barnet Homes does not collect this gender reassignment data from staff or residents. However, it is important that as an organisation we are proactive to the simple needs of transgender communities, for example if a member of staff were to disclose themselves as transgender, which bathroom would they use? It is best practice to have policies in place so any transgender person does not feel needlessly embarrassed.

**10)Actions**

The following table summarises actions we will put in place as a result of the above analysis. These will be incorporated into our wider Equality and Diversity Improvement Plan.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Women	Better support and encouragement for women to increase likelihood of progression to senior management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put mentoring scheme in place</li> <li>• HR to discuss with managers if flexible working policy is working</li> <li>• Analyse gender profile of applicants and reasons for applicants being unsuccessful</li> <li>• Focus group for women staff</li> </ul>
BME	Better representation of BME staff at senior management and board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring scheme</li> <li>• Analyse ethnicity profile of applicants and reasons for applicants being unsuccessful</li> <li>• Focus group for BME staff</li> </ul>
Disabled	Increase disabled staff representation at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update staff disability information to ensure data is correct and up to date, publicising what is considered a disability under the Equality Act<sup>1</sup> and including examples; also publicise steps we are taking for LGB groups</li> <li>• Publicise to staff “two tick symbol” and ensure we are fulfilling our commitment.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> A disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities

Group	Objective	Actions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage disabled people to apply for job vacancies by evidencing in job adverts how we can make adjustments and support them</li> <li>• Use websites which help match disabled candidates with employers</li> <li>• Hold focus groups with disabled staff to understand challenges and barriers</li> <li>• Work with Adult Social Care to look at opportunities for disabled service users to gain employment at Barnet Homes.</li> </ul>
LGB	Staff feel happy disclosing their sexuality and Barnet Homes attracts more LGB applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take part in Stonewall annual benchmarking exercise, “The Workplace Equality Index”, to establish base position. Put in place improvements based on outcome.</li> </ul>
Age	Staff are treated fairly through organisational change regardless of age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out an impact assessment on our managing change policy</li> </ul>
Faith	Increase cultural awareness among staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff to receive cultural awareness training</li> </ul>
Transgender	Put policies are in place to ensure non-discriminatory and respectful treatment of any transgender employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant policies in place to ensure everyday activities such as using the bathroom are clear and non-discriminatory so that if any employee were to disclose being transgender, thought has already gone into how to respond</li> </ul>