

Equality Status Report

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Introduction

The Royal Blind Group, comprising Royal Blind and Scottish War Blinded, is an organisation that promotes the inclusion and empowerment of people with visual impairments, and as such regards equality in all its respects as something that should be inherent in our service delivery, our staffing and our management and governance.

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a public sector equality duty in order to ensure that public authorities and those carrying out a public function consider how they can positively contribute to a more equal society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day business.

The establishment of Specific Duties under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations in relation to the Board's role as the manager of the Royal Blind School, a grant aided school, provides a framework for the setting and monitoring of formal aspirations for the continual improvement of our performance in attaining equality in all our functions and our employment practice.

These reports are written so as to transparently fulfil our obligations under the Regulations. They also serve the function of monitoring, managing and improving our equalities performance across our whole organisation.

This report is divided into three sections:

- Mainstreaming the equality duty – this section outlines how we make the equality duty integral to the exercise of our functions. It covers what we do and how we integrate equality into our employment practice and our service provision. Specific examples are provided from each of our services.
- Employee information – this section includes details of:
 - the composition of our employees broken down by protected characteristic
 - recruitment, development and retention of employees broken down by protected characteristic
 - information on progress made in gathering and using employee information to better meet the equality duty
 - occupational segregation information for the Royal Blind School
 - gender pay gap information and statement on equal pay.
- Progress towards achieving our equality outcomes and a fresh set of outcomes that will enable us to better perform the equality duty over the next four years.

MAINSTREAMING THE EQUALITY DUTY

This section of the report provides information on how we make the equality duty integral to the exercise of our functions. It covers what we do and how we integrate equality into our employment practice and our service provision. Specific examples of how we meet the different needs of the duty in the services we provide are included.

What we do

Royal Blind cares for, educates and employs blind and partially sighted people from across the UK. We support people of all ages - from babies and toddlers at our pre-school play group, children and young people at our grant aided special school (The Royal Blind School), after school and holiday club (Kidscene) and young adults service (Forward Vision and Allermuir), to elderly people in our care home (Braeside House).

We operate the Learning Hub, which provides teacher training, educational resources, advice and workshops to teachers and other education professionals working with visually impaired children and young people.

We run the Scottish Braille Press, which produces books and magazines in braille and transcribes any document for individuals and businesses into braille, large print or audio format.

Scottish War Blinded supports veterans with a visual impairment from across Scotland through an outreach service and the Linburn Centre in West Lothian.

We have also committed to establish two new services in Paisley, West of Scotland. The new services will include a nursing home specialising in the care of visually impaired older people and a Scottish War Blinded centre.

How we integrate equality into the exercise of our functions

Our vision is that we will make a significant contribution to building a community in which blind and partially sighted people, including those who also have other disabilities, are fully included and lead fulfilling lives.

Our mission is to:

- empower young people to become confident individuals, successful learners, effective contributors and responsible citizens
- enrich education and care provision in all education sectors in Scotland and beyond, improving the effectiveness of inclusion of visually impaired and multiply disabled pupils and students
- respect the rights of individuals, and develop people's skills and resources for independent living
- support and provide care for people when they need it
- provide written and spoken text in accessible formats
- involve blind and partially sighted people as leaders, employees and supporters
- be innovative and add to the diversity available services.

Equality is at the heart of everything we do. It is inherent to our vision, mission, our governance and management as well as our day-to-day work.

Our Board and Committees include four (soon to be five) members who are visually impaired and ensure appropriate representation of our service users' interests in all our governance decisions. We currently employ 11 staff with a declared visual impairment. All new employees receive Visual Impairment Awareness Training, with more in-depth specialised training provided regularly within the relevant services.

Equality is part of our organisational culture. Throughout all our activities we aim to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited practices
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

How we integrate equality into our employment practice

We are committed to the principle of equal opportunities in employment and are opposed to any form of less favourable treatment through direct or indirect discrimination accorded to employees or job applicants, on the grounds of sex, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, age or disability (the 'protected characteristics').

We strive to create a productive working environment which is representative of and responsive to different cultures and groups, and where everyone has an equal chance to succeed.

We are committed to embracing and supporting equality and diversity and challenging behaviour and attitudes that prevent this achievement. Using fair and objective employment practices, our aim is to ensure that all employees and potential employees are treated fairly and with respect at all stages of their employment.

- **Our policies and procedures**

Our policies and practices are reviewed regularly, and their impact on equalities is assessed at all stages of the review process. Our Equal Opportunities Policy is a comprehensive and regularly reviewed document which reflects our current practice around equal opportunities.

The policy applies to all aspects of our relationship with staff and to relations between staff members at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, opportunities for promotion, training and development, terms and conditions of work, performance management, pay and benefits, termination of employment, any references issued and to every other aspect of employment. We are committed to taking

appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities.

To raise staff awareness around what constitutes discrimination, the policy also includes definitions of the different forms of discrimination, including direct, indirect, associative and perceptive discrimination, harassment and third party harassment and victimisation. We also have a separate Dignity at Work Policy which covers harassment, victimisation and bullying in more detail. Any allegations of potential breaches of our equal opportunities policy are treated very seriously and dealt with under our grievance or disciplinary procedures. Specific training on Dignity at Work has begun being rolled out across the organisation from late 2016/17 and will continue over the next twelve months.

We successfully attained Investors In People status during the early part of 2017, which is an indication of how well we are “living our values” as an organisation. Feedback from staff surveys and individual discussions which took place during the assessment suggested that we are embracing the values incorporated within our policies and procedures.

- **Recruitment and selection**

We aim to ensure that no job applicant is subject to discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics. Our recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

Job advertisements avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage groups with a particular protected characteristic from applying. We advertise all our external vacancies to a diverse labour market and all job adverts include an appropriate short policy statement on equal opportunities. Shortlisting of applicants is done by more than one person to avoid unconscious bias.

- **Training, promotion and conditions of work**

Staff training needs are identified through regular staff appraisals. All staff are given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions are made on the basis of merit and suitability for the promoted role.

We operate a pay scale system which ensures that the salary and conditions of each job relate to the title and description of that job and not to any characteristic of the person carrying it out. Our conditions of work, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all staff who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

- **Termination of employment**

We ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory. We also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

- **Disability**

We encourage our staff to talk to us about their disability so that we can support them as appropriate. This often involves making reasonable adjustments to accommodate the specific needs of the employee, and is normally supported by occupational health recommendations.

We monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared to other staff. Where reasonable, we take steps to improve access for disabled staff and service users.

- **Part-time and fixed-term employees**

We monitor the terms and conditions of work of fixed-term and part-time employees, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training and promotion. We ensure that all requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately. Where relevant, we also monitor the progress of fixed-term employees to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

How we integrate equality into our service provision

- **The Royal Blind School**

We aim to ensure that our pupils with visual impairment, including those with additional support needs, have a range of opportunities and experiences to enable them to become successful learners, responsible citizens, confident individuals and effective contributors to society.

Our curriculum is tailored to suit the needs of individual pupils in a learning and living environment which is appropriate to each pupil's needs and potential. All our teachers either have or are working towards the Post Graduate Qualification in Education Support, Visual Impairment. This means our teachers are better able to raise our pupils' academic attainment as well as a whole range of their other achievements, including mobility, communication and life skills.

We adapt a range of print materials to alternative and accessible formats including braille, audio, large print and tactile diagrams. We provide formal mobility, orientation and life skills sessions which facilitate independence. Our building is purpose built and the environment is designed to encourage as much independence as possible at the appropriate level for each pupil. Our facilities include outdoor multi-use games area, sensory garden, hydrotherapy pool, visual and sensory stimulation room, visual assessment suite or soft play area.

By providing a diverse curriculum and a range of activities and support adapted for our pupils, we help our pupils to develop skills which equip them for life in a fast-changing society and contribute to advancing equality of opportunity for children with visual impairment and other disabilities.

The Royal Blind School plays an important part in the national and international development of services for children and young people with visual impairments and works closely with universities, local authorities, the Scottish Government and other service providers to ensure an effective range of high quality services is available to children and young people and their families. This includes support for children attending mainstream or other special schools across the United Kingdom, and support for teachers in mainstream schools that have pupils with a visual impairment. Through this work we promote equality on a national scale and contribute to meeting all the needs of the equality duty: eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

We developed a national education resource centre, the Learning Hub, which helps streamline high calibre specialist support resources and training in order to bridge gaps in the national provision for learners who have visual impairments. Our ambition is for the centre to become a hub and one-stop shop for professional training and development providing customised and bespoke training programmes for individuals, teachers, schools and other professionals.

- **Kidscene**

Our after-school and holiday club welcomes children with and without disabilities. We find that all of the children are able to learn from each other, they learn to respect one another and appreciate that we are all different and that we all need support in different way with aspects of our lives. By attending Kidscene, children grow up knowing that disability is not a barrier to friendships.

The service has a very positive aspect for families who have children with and without disabilities as they can access the same Club.

Kidscene enables children of all backgrounds to be able to play and socialise together and all our activities are adapted to ensure accessibility for all children. Our activities include arts and crafts, outdoor play, group games or baking as well as various trips. Some of our outings are to places which would usually only be used for children with disabilities such as The Yard. This enables children without disabilities to appreciate how difficult it can be for example to ride a bike if you have a disability, however, sometimes with very minimal intervention or adaptation anything is possible.

- **Adult Services**

We provide residential care and short breaks to adults with visual impairment and additional disabilities through two adult services. Forward Vision is a transitional service for young adults between the ages of 17 and 25. Allermuir, opened in the autumn of 2016, provides a home for life with community based supported living.

Our adult services enable adults with visual impairment and other disabilities to spend time with their peers and to develop life skills as much as they are able.

Young adults are supported in developing independence through practicing daily tasks such as menu planning, grocery shopping, laundry and household tasks. They are

encouraged to develop new interests and hobbies, and to participate in a wide range of community and in-house activities as well as supported college or work placements.

We arrange activities such as swimming, cinema, theatre trips, holidays, skiing, dining out, library visits, outings to coffee shops and cafes. We ensure that any potential barriers are removed by adapting activities to ensure all young adults (who choose to) are able to participate. Our community based activities (such as trampoline sessions at Gracemount leisure centre or Ceilidh at Dance Base) help to change the public perception of what young adults with significant complex needs can achieve.

Our young adults at Forward Vision also work in our developing social enterprise 'The Cranberry Tearoom' on a weekly basis. Their tasks include welcoming guests, taking orders, home baking, not forgetting the socialising and undertaking the domestic chores.

- **Braeside House**

The care home is purpose built to meet the needs of those with a visual impairment and other disabilities. Our approach focuses on ability and promoting independence. All residents are encouraged to take part in the life of the home and make new friends. However if they choose not to then this is respected – we ensure freedom of choice for all and respect individual decision making even for those with limited capacity. By seeing the person we avoid 'one size fits all' approach to care, and we encourage families to be involved and included. We have a shared set of values in place which looks at the needs of the residents, the families and the staff.

Our activities are tailored appropriately and based on the residents' interests and requests. Some examples include:

- bowling tournament using an adapted technique
- activities based on verbal communication such as quizzes, crosswords, games, debates and discussions
- outings to places with opportunities to use other senses – garden centres, beach, museums which offer interactive events
- opportunities to attend concerts/recitals.

A new care home, **Jenny's Well**, which is based on the same principles as Braeside House, is due to open in Paisley in the autumn of 2017.

- **Scottish Braille Press**

At Scottish Braille Press we promote equality through producing documents in accessible formats to ensure that blind and partially sighted people can independently and accurately read the information they receive. This helps advance equality of opportunity between people who have a visual impairment and those who do not.

We have a wide range of clients, from individuals to banks, the public sector and exam boards. We support our clients in ensuring their compliance with the Equality Act 2010 by transcribing their documents, such as bank statements and exam papers, into alternative formats based on the customers' personal preferences.

By providing documentation in braille, large print and audio formats we help remove barriers to accessing services and information that blind and partially sighted people often face. By giving people a choice of accessible formats they can request their documentation in, we take account of the specific impairments and ensure that needs of different groups are met. It helps remove social isolation and allows people with visual impairment the same access to information and services.

We provide supported employment opportunities for disabled people, in particular those with a visual impairment but also other disabilities. We ensure appropriate support for our disabled staff through their line managers. This includes more intensive support for employees taken on through the government Work Choice scheme, which exists specifically for people who are disabled and their disability means that they face significant barriers to work. As at 31 March 2017 we had 19 people employed under the scheme (12 of these are on permanent contracts and 7 on fixed-term contracts). Out of the 19 employees, 4 were physically disabled, 3 had mental health problems, 6 were blind/visually impaired, 2 had learning disabilities and 4 were on the autistic spectrum. The respective line managers have regular meetings with these employees to check that they're happy and well supported in their work. They also discuss the future goals of these staff and help them with career advice and planning.

- **Scottish War Blinded**

Our **outreach team** work across Scotland helping reduce social isolation caused by visual impairment and other disabilities. Examples of the specific impact of the work of our outreach workers on equality are listed below:

- We use venues that are open to the general public for our reunions, lunches and member conference. We share our knowledge and skills with the venues to give them the confidence to treat our members well and to be welcoming with other blind people in the future.
- We advocate on behalf of members to ensure they are treated with respect.
- We give regular talks to the general public about our services, showing how people with a sight loss are still able to lead full lives. The feedback from the public is often astonishment at what our members achieve.
- We ensure that our activities are suitable for members with and without care needs. Our members with physical and mental disabilities are able to socialise with others with our support.

The **Linburn Centre** has been specially designed for people of all ages who have lost some or all of their sight. We offer a range of activities and support in daily living skills, which are aimed at supporting veterans to build their sense of confidence in living with a visual impairment. Our members are predominantly male, but we provide activities suitable for all genders. Some of our activities include:

- skills kitchen supporting members in cooking and life skills
- art room which incorporates painting, pottery, model building, embroidery, sewing, flower arranging (supported by a wide range of assistive technology such as LED magnifiers or floodlights lamps)
- gardening (we provide raised beds for members who use a wheelchair and wish to participate in gardening)

- woodwork workshops
- computer skills, including training on how to use specialist software for visual impairment as well as specialist keyboards and touch screen technology
- experiences such as white water rafting, tank driving, 4 x 4 driving, motor biking, abseiling, gliding or acoustic shooting, which our members never dreamed of being able to do when they lost their sight
- community based activities including visits to theatre, museums and art galleries, special exhibitions including our upcoming foreign trips to the battlefields in Europe.

A second centre, the **Hawkhead Centre**, is due to open in Paisley in the autumn of 2017. This will offer a similar range of activities and support for members in the West of Scotland.

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Introduction

This section of the report contains details of:

- the composition of our employees broken down by protected characteristic
- recruitment, development and retention of employees broken down by protected characteristic
- information on progress made in gathering and using employee information to better meet the equality duty
- occupational segregation information for the Royal Blind School
- gender pay gap information and statements on equal pay.

Gathering and using employee information

We now have established procedures which ensure that the equal opportunities data we hold about our employees and job applicants is representative. This helps us ensure that our equal opportunities approach and practices are effective and allows us to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our organisation.

All job applicants are asked to fill in the equal opportunities form when they apply for a position with us. Provision of this information is voluntary and it does not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information is removed from applications before shortlisting, and kept solely for the purpose of equal opportunities monitoring and positive action to recruit disabled persons under the government's "Disability Confident" Scheme.

If the successful candidate didn't provide equal opportunities information with their application, he or she is asked for it again on commencement of employment.

We ensure that employee information in relation to disability is updated if new information comes to light during the course of a staff member's employment, for example through our procedures for managing sickness absence, rather than only being updated at the time the employee joins the organisation. This means that our records in relation to employees' disability status accurately reflect our staff composition in this respect. Our 2015 report showed that 8.91% of all our employees were disabled, compared with 16.08% in 2016 and 15.07% in 2017. Within the School, the 2015 report showed that 1.25% of School employees were disabled, compared with 8.45% in 2016 and 7.52% in 2017.

In 2017 we introduced a new HR system with self-service access to own information for employees. This means employees can now quickly and easily view and update their personal information that we keep (we did not have self-service functionality before, employees were filling in paper forms and sending them to HR). We noticed that this new

functionality led to some employees changing their information to 'prefer not to say', as although they felt comfortable providing such data at recruitment stage, they don't necessarily want this associated with employment record. We are planning to further raise awareness of the reasons for gathering and keeping this information about our employees when we promote this Equality Report to our staff.

We now consistently gather equal opportunities data relating to recruitment, retention and development.

Analysing this data helps us take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity across all our employment practices.

The composition of our employees

As at 31 March 2017, we employed a total of 475 staff, out of whom 233 (49.05%) worked full time and 242 (50.94%) worked part time. These figures are relatively unchanged since 2016 when the corresponding figures were 47.80% full time and 52.20% part time.

Within the Royal Blind School, we employed 124 staff, out of whom 60 (48.38%) worked full time and 64 (51.61%) worked part time. Again, these figures are relatively unchanged, although there are fewer staff now compared to a year ago, when the school employed 142 staff. In 2016 the split was 46.48% full time and 53.52% part time.

Sections below outline employee information under the following protected characteristics: gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, religion and belief, marriage/civil partnership.

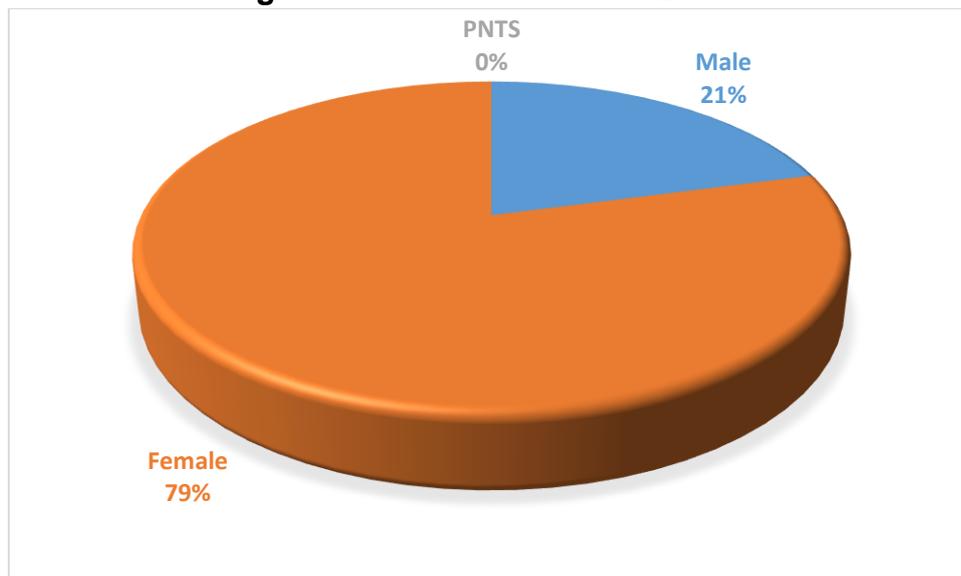
The employment information presented in this report covers the last 12 months since our last Employee Information Report was published in April 2016. Under each protected characteristic, we have provided the following information:

- the overall composition of our employees as at 31 March 2017
- comparison with the 2016 report, where information relating to the particular characteristic was included in the previous report
- new employees appointed between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017
- job applicants between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017
- leavers between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017
- employees promoted internally between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017.

We have provided information relating to the whole organisation, and additionally about the Royal Blind School taken alone in order to meet our regulatory requirements.

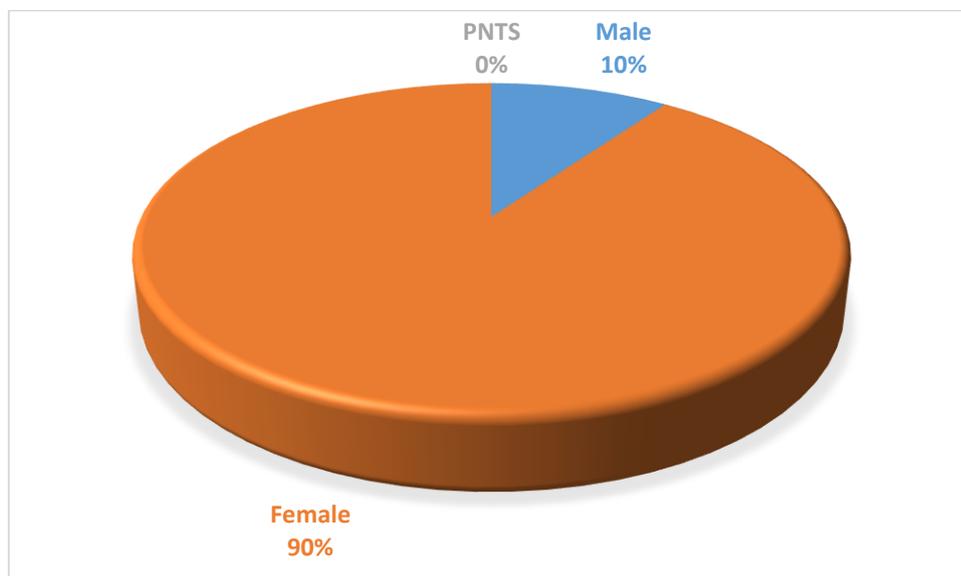
Gender

- The whole organisation as at 31 March 2017



Gender	2017 report	2016 report
Female	79.22%	79.30%
Male	20.78%	20.70%

- The Royal Blind School as at 31 March 2017:



Gender	2017 report	2016 report
Female	90.23%	90.85%
Male	9.77%	9.15%

In the following tables figures in brackets represent the 2015-16 statistics.

- **Recruitment**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Gender	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Female	76.19% (70.31%)	80.00% (81.82%)
Male	23.81% (29.69%)	20.00% (18.18%)

NB New employees' gender is confirmed from their passport as either male or female.

Job applicants between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Gender	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Female	66.39% (58.59%)	67.39% (68.25%)
Male	29.06% (38.86%)	26.94% (25.40%)
Prefer not to say	4.55% (2.54%)	5.70% (6.35%)

- **Leavers** between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Gender	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Female	72.86% (71.88%)	84.21% (75.00%)
Male	27.14% (26.56%)	15.79% (18.75%)

- **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Gender	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Female	89.47% (92.31%)	100% (100%)
Male	10.53% (7.69%)	0.00% (0.00%)

NB At the School only 4 people were promoted during the period.

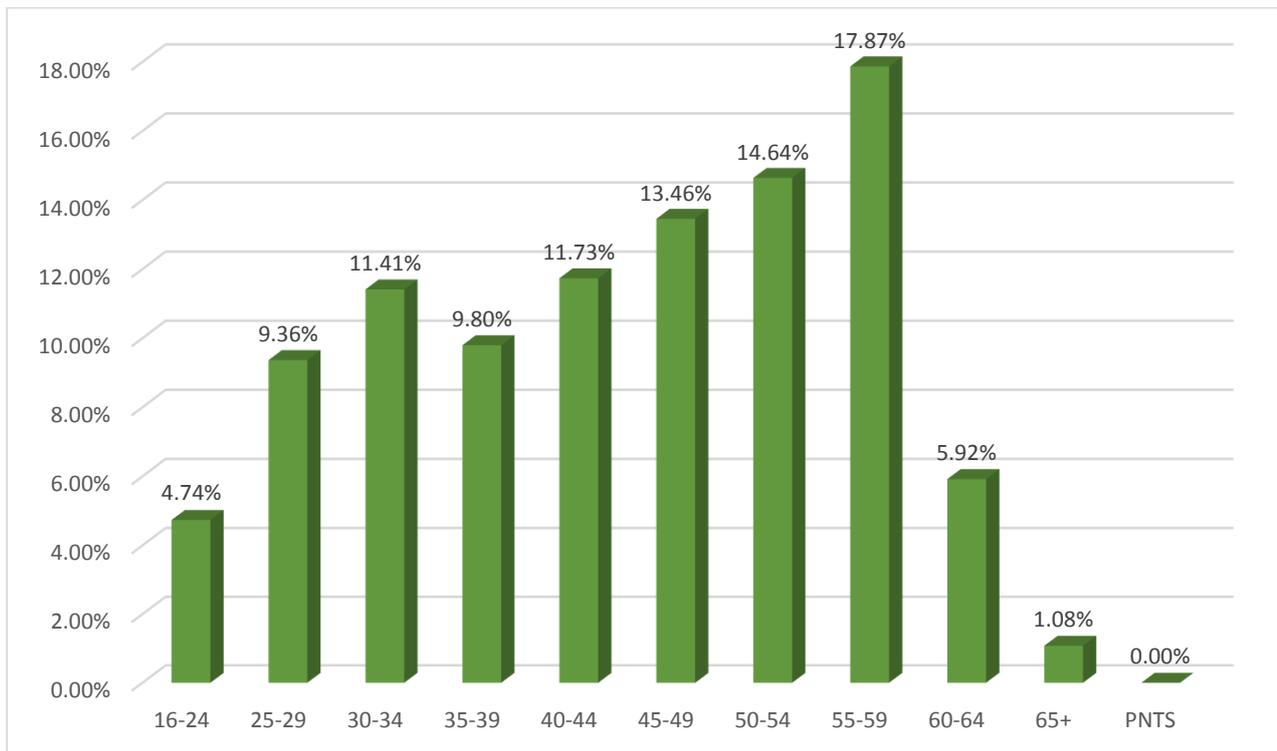
A vast majority of our employees are female. This reflects the typical gender mix in the activities we operate, which are mostly care and education sector. The overall gender split in the care sector, as reported by SSSC, was 84% female and 16% male in 2016.

The gender mix for the whole organisation is at a similar level as in April 2016. In terms of the School specifically, the proportion of male employees compared to female staff increased slightly from 9.15% in 2016 to 9.77% in 2017.

We believe that the recruitment, retention and development data outlined above is consistent with a fair and equal approach to our employment practices.

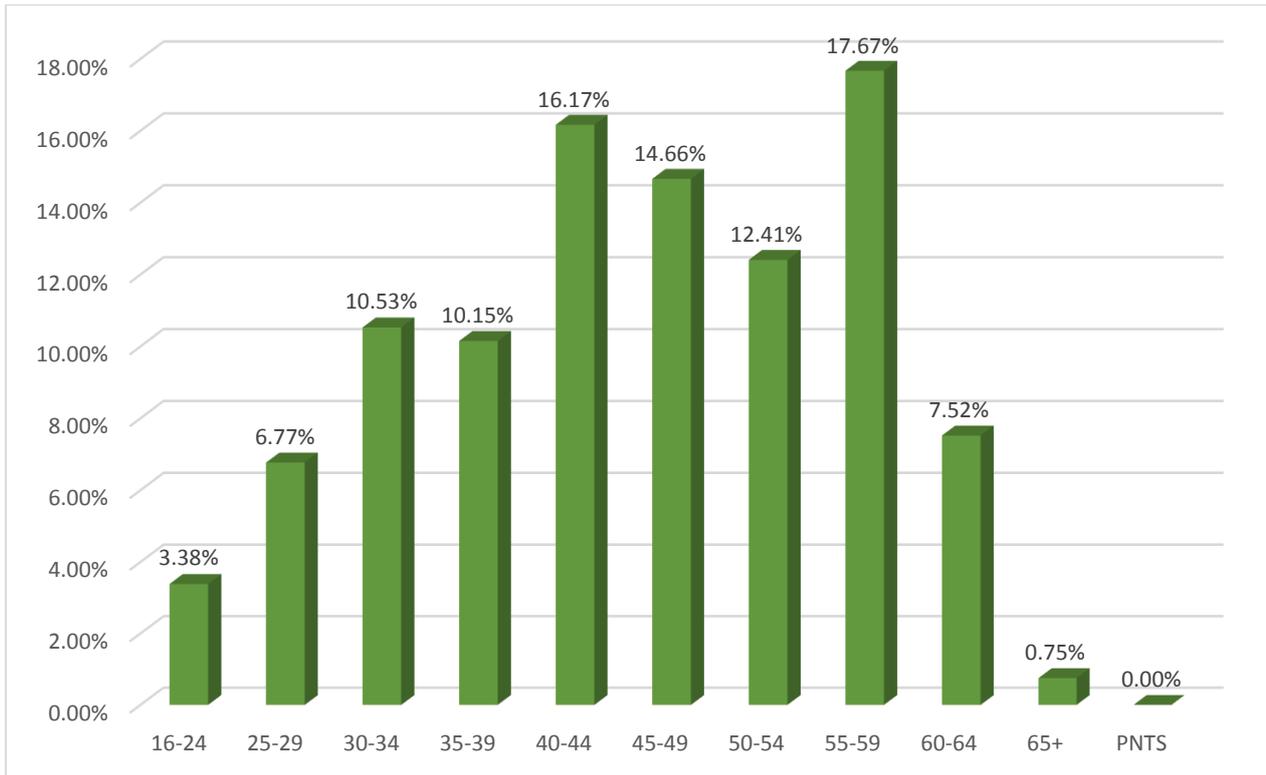
Age

- The whole organisation as at 31 March 2017:



Age	2017 report	2016 report
16-24	4.74%	4.63%
25-29	9.36%	9.25%
30-34	11.41%	11.45%
35-39	9.80%	9.69%
40-44	11.73%	12.78%
45-49	13.46%	12.33%
50-54	14.64%	14.98%
55-59	17.87%	18.06%
60-64	5.92%	5.51%
65+	1.08%	1.32%

- The Royal Blind School as at 31 March 2017:**



Age	2017 report	2016 report
16-24	3.38%	3.52%
25-29	6.77%	5.63%
30-34	10.53%	10.56%
35-39	10.15%	9.86%
40-44	16.17%	17.61%
45-49	14.66%	14.09%
50-54	12.41%	12.68%
55-59	17.67%	16.90%
60-64	7.52%	8.45%
65+	0.75%	0.70%

In the following tables figures in brackets represent the 2015-16 statistics.

- **Age at recruitment**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Age	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
16-24	15.48% (20.31%)	6.67% (27.27%)
25-29	21.43% (23.44%)	33.33% (18.18%)
30-34	11.90% (6.25%)	6.67% (9.09%)
35-39	10.71% (10.94%)	6.67% (0.00%)
40-44	7.14% (6.25%)	13.33% (9.09%)
45-49	13.10% (12.50%)	20.00% (27.27%)
50-54	14.29% (12.50%)	6.67% (9.09%)
55-59	2.38% (4.69%)	0.00% (0.00%)
60-64	3.57% (0.00%)	6.67% (0.00%)
65+	0.00% (3.12%)	0.00% (0.00%)

Job applicants between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Age	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
16-24	24.24% (28.40%)	23.83% (11.11%)
25-29	20.25% (21.97%)	17.62% (23.81%)
30-34	12.53% (8.97%)	13.47% 19.05%)
35-39	7.58% (10.16%)	7.77% (7.94%)
40-44	7.02% (7.17%)	9.33% (9.52%)
45-49	8.13% (9.27%)	9.33% (11.11%)
50-54	10.88% (7.03%)	10.36% (9.52%)
55-59	5.92% (4.78%)	5.70% (3.17%)
60-64	2.48% (1.20%)	2.07% (1.59%)
65+	0.14% (0.15%)	0.52% (0.00%)
PNTS	0.83% (0.90%)	0.00% (3.17%)

- **Leavers** between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Age	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
16-24	8.57% (18.75%)	0.00% (0.00%)
25-29	20.00% (14.06%)	0.00% (25.00%)
30-34	11.43% (14.06%)	5.26% (25.00%)
35-39	11.43% (7.81%)	5.26% (12.50%)
40-44	11.43% (4.69%)	21.05% (6.25%)
45-49	7.14% (9.38%)	10.53% (0.00%)
50-54	10.00% (12.50%)	5.26% (12.50%)
55-59	10.00% (3.13%)	21.05% (0.00%)
60-64	8.57% (9.38%)	31.58% (12.50%)
65+	1.43% (6.25%)	0.00% (6.25%)

- **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Age	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
16-24	0.00% (15.38%)	0.00% (0.00%)
25-29	26.32% (15.38%)	0.00% (0.00%)
30-34	15.79% (23.08%)	0.00% (50.00%)
35-39	10.53% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
40-44	0.00% (15.38%)	0.00% (0.00%)
45-49	21.05% (23.08%)	50.00% (0.00%)
50-54	15.79% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
55-59	5.26% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
60-64	5.26% (7.69%)	50.00% (50.00%)

We have a balance of employees of different ages across the organisation. The lower representation of the 16-24 age group is influenced by the qualification requirements for a lot of our positions, dictated by the sectors we operate in.

The age bracket for 55 to 59 has the highest proportion of staff in both the whole organisation and the school. Turnover is low in the organisation, so it is perhaps unsurprising that many people choose to stay with us long into their working careers.

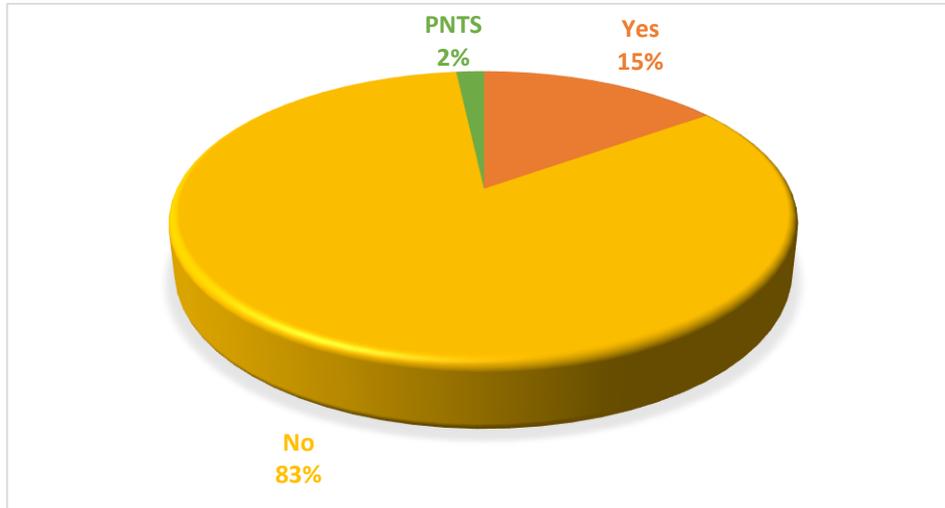
The figures for job applicants and new starters are fairly well balanced, suggesting we are attracting a wide range of applicants of all ages to Royal Blind. This, in turn shows how well our current recruitment processes are.

The slightly higher proportion of leavers aged 60 and over is influenced by staff retirements. We have gone through a voluntary redundancy process at the School in 2016 and 5 of our staff below state pension age decided to take up their pension and

retire early. Our long serving employees have a generous final salary pension scheme which allows for early retirements from the age of 55.

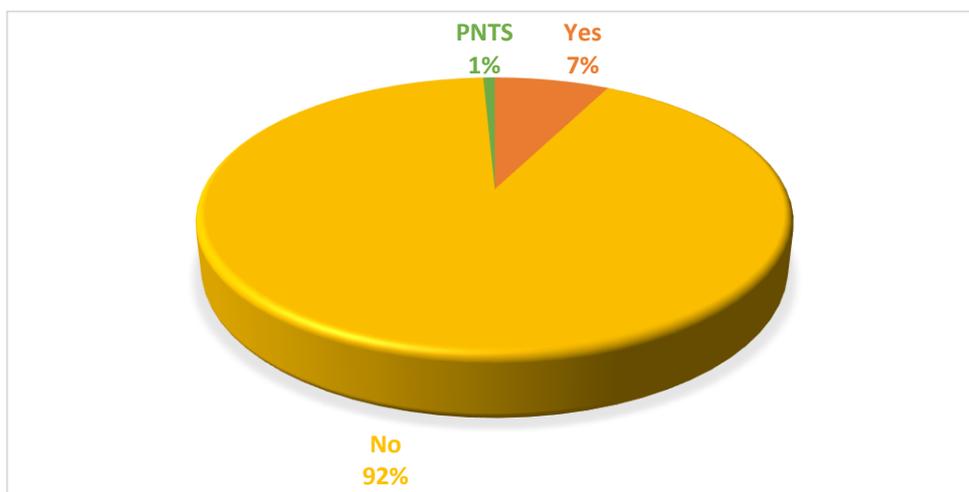
Disability

- The whole organisation as at 31 March 2017:



Disability status	2017 report	2016 report
Disabled	15.07%	16.08%
Not disabled	83.21%	83.48%
Prefer not to say	1.72%	0.44%

- The Royal Blind School as at 31 March 2017:



Disability status	2017 report	2016 report
Disabled	7.52%	8.45%
Not disabled	91.73%	91.55%
Prefer not to say	0.75%	0.00%

In the following tables figures in brackets represent the 2015-16 statistics.

- **Recruitment**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Disability status	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Disabled	5.95% (17.19%)	6.67% (9.09%)
Not disabled	76.19% (79.69%)	73.33% (90.91%)
Prefer not to say	17.86% (3.12%)	20.00% (0.00%)

Job applicants appointed between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Disability status	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Disabled	7.99% (11.21%)	6.74% (7.94%)
Not disabled	86.78% (82.96%)	88.60% (85.71%)
Prefer not to say	5.23% (5.83%)	4.66% (6.35%)

- **Leavers** between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Disability status	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Disabled	22.86% (15.63%)	15.79% (0.00%)
Not disabled	70.00% (82.81%)	73.68% (93.75%)
Prefer not to say	7.14% (1.56%)	10.53% (6.25%)

- **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Disability status	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Disabled	21.05% (15.38%)	0% (0.00%)
Not disabled	68.42% (84.62%)	100.00% (100.00%)
Prefer not to say	10.53% (0.00%)	0% (0.00%)

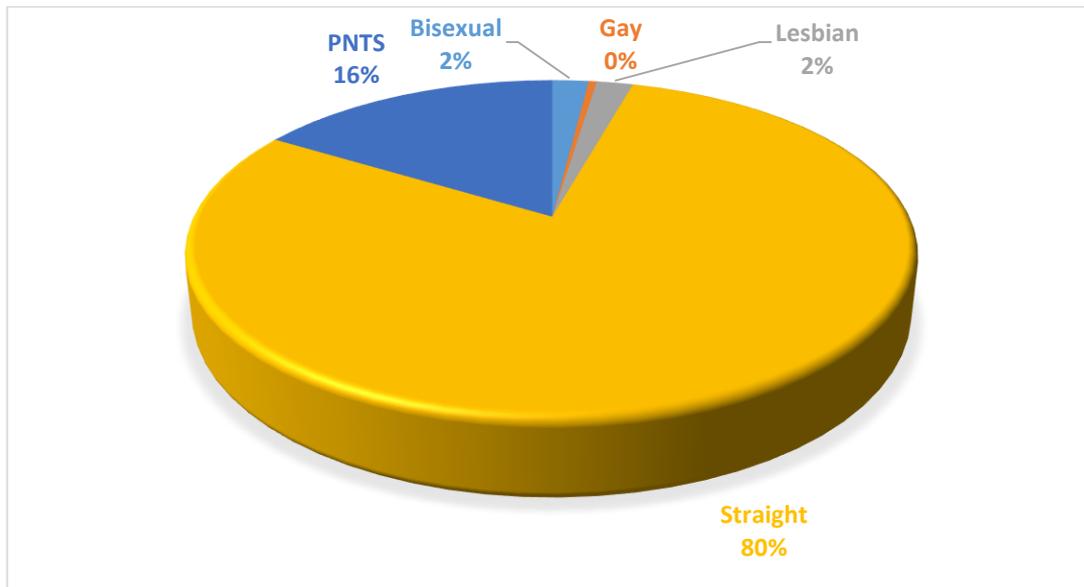
The proportion of disabled staff we employ is similar to the 2016 report. There is a slight increase in the proportion of employees who chose not to disclose whether or not they have a disability. This is particularly visible with new employees appointed over the past year: 17.86% of new employees in the whole organisation chose not to disclose whether they are disabled, compared to only 3.12% in the past year. For the School, this figure is 20%, compared to 0% in 2015 – 16.

A higher number of disabled leavers is influenced by an increase in work-choice employees being brought in by Scottish Braille Press, who work with us for one year on a fixed term and then move on.

The proportion of disabled employees we promoted internally (21.05%) over the past 2 years is higher than the general proportion of disabled staff working for the organisation, which is consistent with our commitment to recruiting, developing and retaining disabled employees. This was supported by Royal Blind adopting the principles of the Disability Confident scheme, which is covered in more details under 'Progress towards achieving equality outcomes' section below. This number actually relates to 1 in 5 of the people who were promoted being disabled, which is a very positive message.

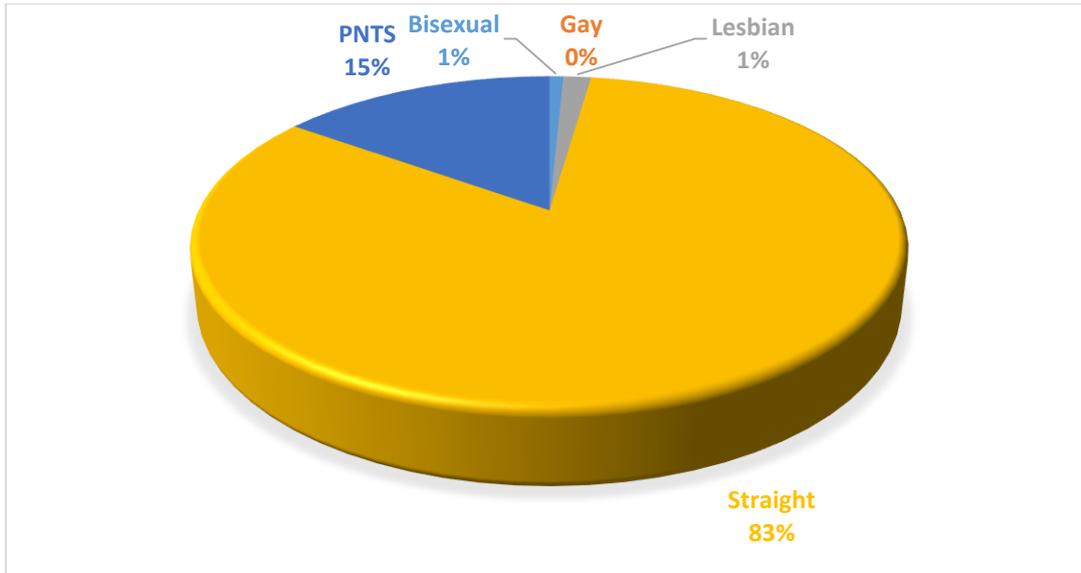
Sexual Orientation

- The whole organisation as at 31 March 2017:



Sexual orientation	2017 report	2016 report
Bisexual	1.94%	1.98%
Gay	0.43%	0.44%
Lesbian	1.94%	2.20%
Heterosexual/straight	79.44%	78.86%
Prefer not to say	16.25%	16.52%

- **The Royal Blind School as at 31 March 2017:**



Sexual orientation	2017 report	2016 report
Bisexual	0.75%	0.70%
Lesbian	1.50%	1.41%
Heterosexual/straight	82.71%	82.40%
Prefer not to say	15.04%	15.49%

In the following tables figures in brackets represent the 2015-16 statistics.

- **Recruitment**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Sexual orientation	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Bisexual	3.57% (4.69%)	0.00% (9.09%)
Gay	1.19% (3.13%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Lesbian	0.00% (1.56%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Heterosexual/straight	79.76% (82.81%)	93.33% (81.82%)
Prefer not to say	15.48% (7.81%)	6.67% (9.09%)

Job applicants between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Sexual orientation	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Bisexual	2.62% (2.09%)	2.59% (1.59%)
Gay	1.24% (2.09%)	1.04% (1.59%)
Lesbian	0.83% (0.30%)	1.04% (1.59%)
Heterosexual/straight	88.43% (85.50%)	89.12% (84.13%)
Prefer not to say	6.89% (10.02%)	6.22% (11.10%)

- **Leavers** between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Sexual orientation	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Bisexual	2.86% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Gay	2.86% (3.12%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Lesbian	0.00% (3.12%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Heterosexual/straight	74.29% (84.38%)	89.47% (93.75%)
Prefer not to say	20.00% (9.38%)	10.53% (6.25%)

- **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

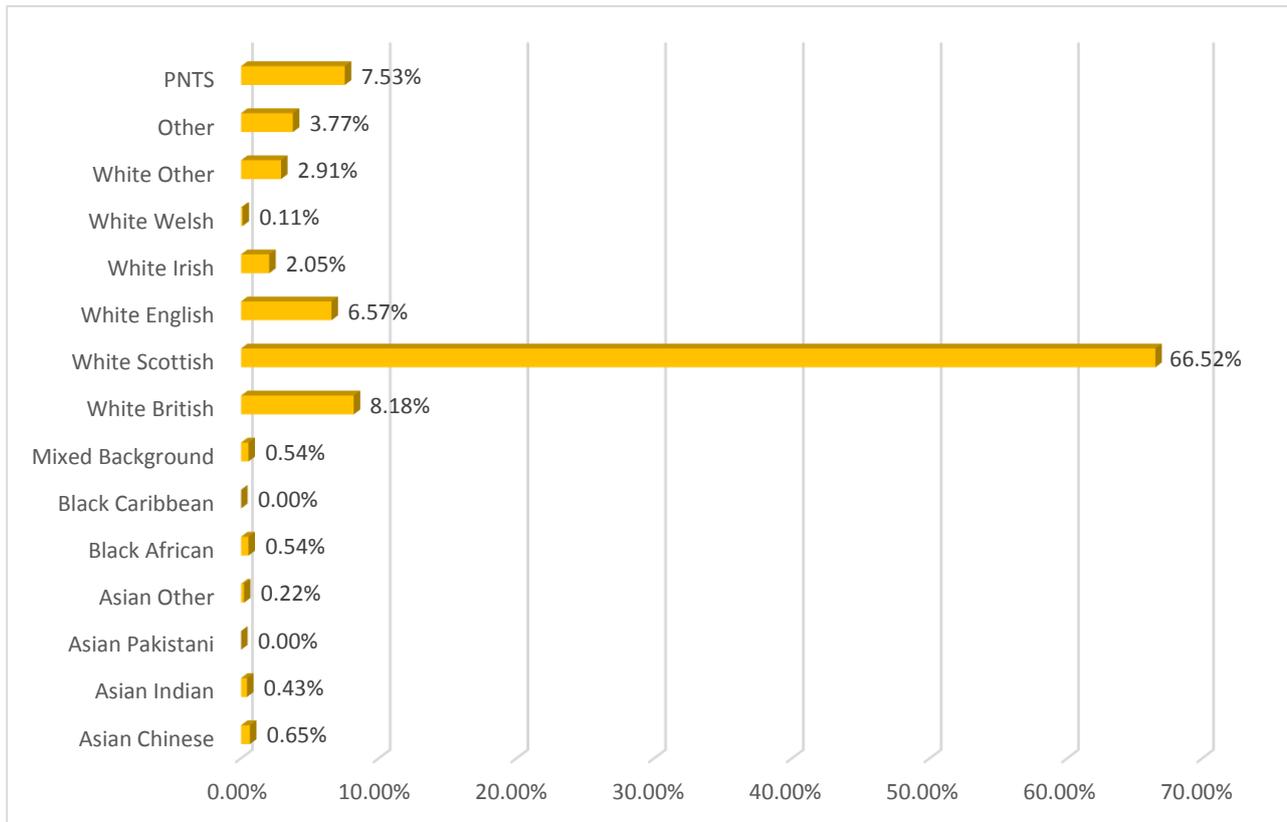
Sexual orientation	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Bisexual	5.26% (0.00%)	0% (0.00%)
Heterosexual/straight	78.95% (100%)	100% (100%)
Prefer not to say	15.79% (0.00%)	0% (0.00%)

It's worth noting that a greater proportion of LBGT and PNTS people are appointed as new employees than actually apply.

There is still a relatively high proportion of staff who prefer not to declare their sexual orientation, and these figures are similar to or higher than in 2016. This suggests that in this era of social networking people are far more attuned to the need for protecting information that they see as private or, more worryingly, that people genuinely do not wish to disclose their sexuality for fear of not getting a job, or that if they do, they may not be able to move on within the organisation. This, of course, would not be the case in Royal Blind where equality is treated seriously and with respect.

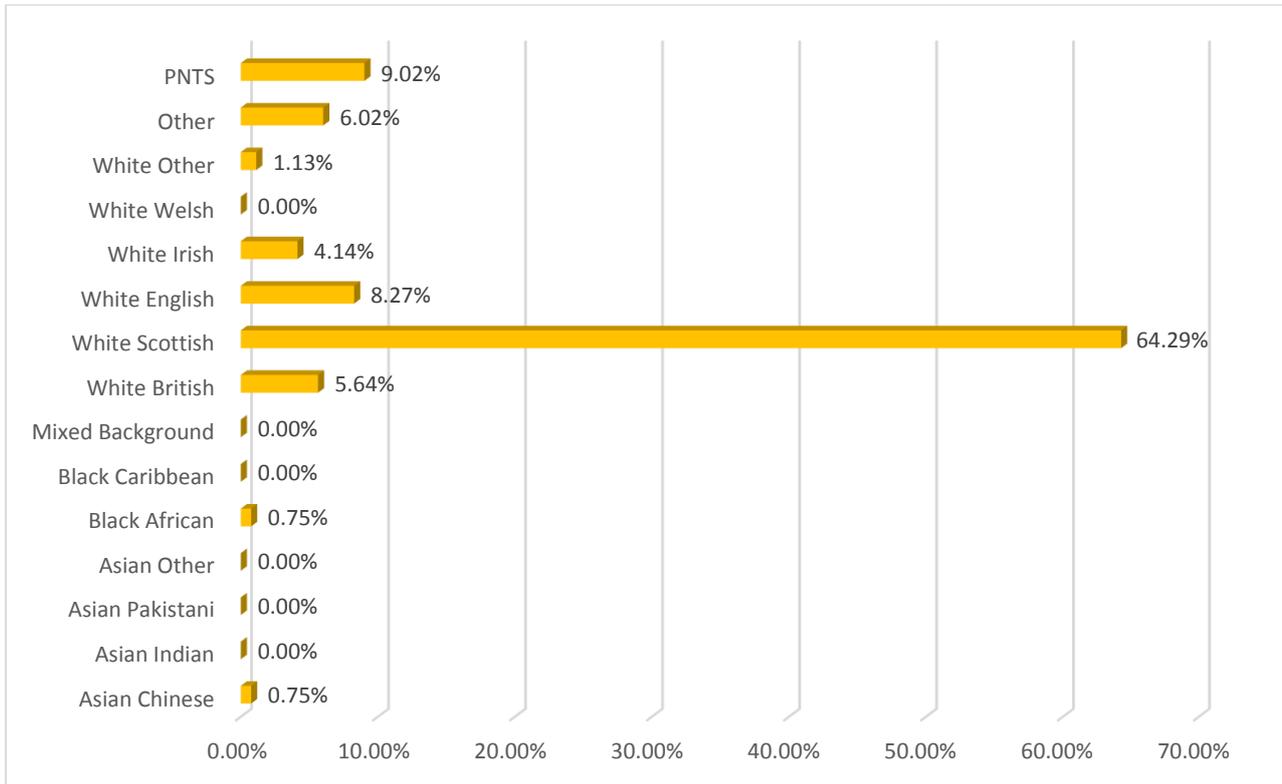
Ethnic Origin

- The whole organisation as at 31 March 2017:



Ethnic origin	2017 report	2016 report
Asian Chinese	0.65%	0.66%
Asian Indian	0.43%	0.66%
Asian Other	0.22%	0.22%
Black African	0.54%	0.44%
Mixed Background	0.54%	0.44%
White British	8.18%	6.61%
White Scottish	66.52%	67.40%
White English	6.57%	6.83%
White Irish	2.05%	2.42%
White Welsh	0.11%	0.22%
White Other	2.91%	2.64%
Other	3.77%	4.19%
Prefer not to say	7.53%	7.27%

• **The Royal Blind School as at 31 March 2017:**



Ethnic origin	2017 report	2016 report
Asian Chinese	0.75%	0.70%
Black African	0.75%	0.70%
White British	5.64%	4.93%
White Scottish	64.29%	65.49%
White English	8.27%	8.45%
White Irish	4.14%	4.23%
White Other	1.13%	1.41%
Other	6.02%	5.63%
Prefer not to say	9.02%	8.45%

In the following tables figures in brackets represent the 2015-16 statistics.

- **Recruitment:**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Ethnic origin	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Asian Indian	0.00% (1.56%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Asian Other	1.19% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Black African	2.38% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
White British	26.19% (29.69%)	20.00% (9.09%)
White Scottish	45.24% (53.12%)	53.33% (90.91%)
White English	1.19% (3.13%)	0.00% (0.00%)
White Irish	0.00% (1.56%)	0.00% (0.00%)
White Other	8.33% (7.81%)	13.13% (0.00%)
Other	1.19% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
PNTS	14.29% (3.13%)	13.33% (0.00%)

Job applicants between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Ethnic origin	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Asian Chinese	1.10% (0.90%)	1.55% (0.00%)
Asian Indian	0.55% (1.19%)	0.52% (3.17%)
Asian Pakistani	0.28% (0.15%)	0.52% (0.00%)
Asian Other	0.69% (0.75%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Black African	2.75% (0.90%)	2.07% (1.59%)
Black Caribbean	0.14% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Mixed Background	0.96% (1.19%)	0.52% (0.00%)
White British	27.96% (29.45%)	26.42% (31.75%)
White Scottish	46.97% (43.05%)	40.93% (42.86%)
White English	2.34% (2.54%)	4.15% (0.00%)
White Irish	1.65% (1.49%)	1.55% (0.00%)
White Welsh	0.28% (0.45%)	0.52% (0.00%)
White Other	12.95% (15.70%)	19.69% (15.87%)
Other	0.28% (1.19%)	0.52% (0.00%)
PNTS	1.10% (1.05%)	1.04% (4.76%)

- **Leavers** between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Ethnic origin	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Asian Indian	2.86% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Black African	1.43% (1.56%)	0.00% (0.00%)
White British	8.57% (6.25%)	10.53% (0.00%)
White Scottish	57.14% (64.06%)	63.16% (68.75%)
White English	2.86% (15.62%)	5.26% (12.50%)
White Irish	1.43% (3.13%)	5.26% (6.25%)
White Welsh	1.43% (1.56%)	0.00% (0.00%)
White Other	1.43% (3.13%)	10.53% (0.00%)
Other	12.86% (1.56%)	0.00% (6.25%)
PNTS	10.00% (3.13%)	5.26% (6.25%)

- **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

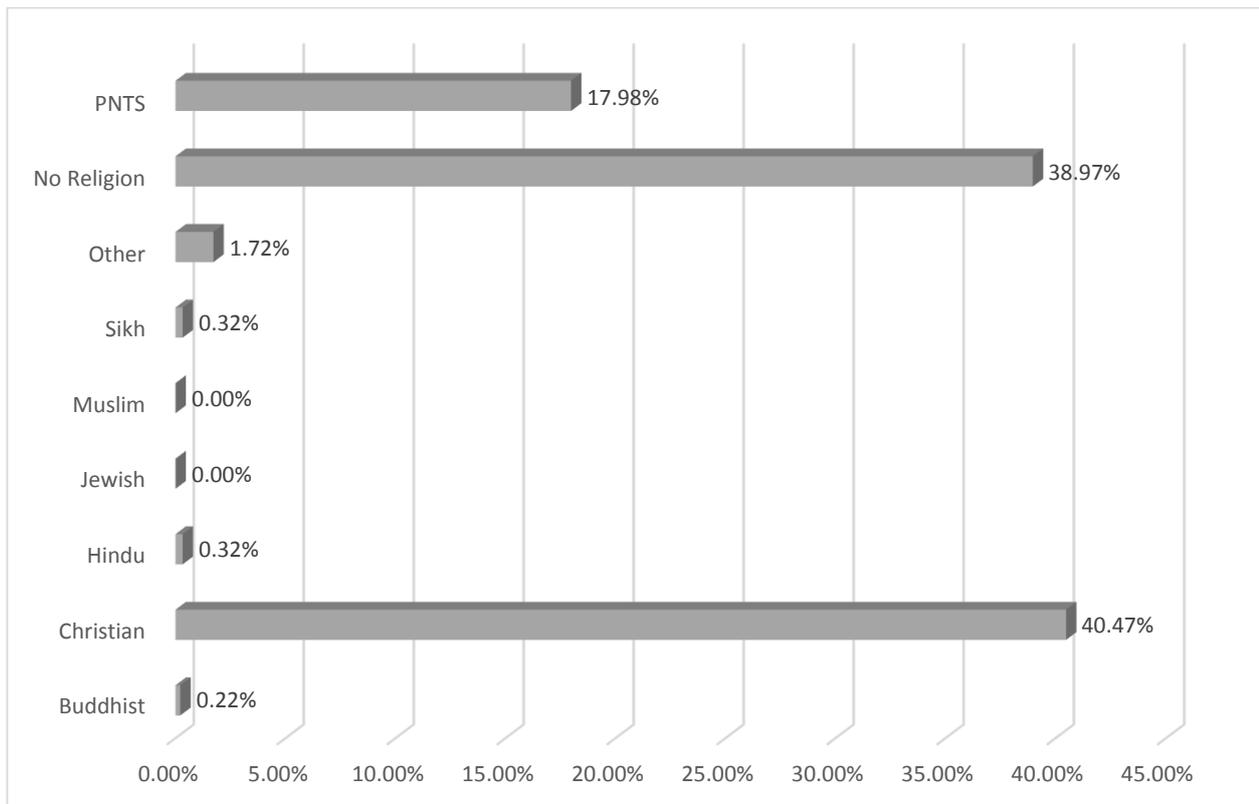
Ethnic origin	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Mixed Background	5.26% (7.69%)	0.00% (0.00%)
White British	21.05% (15.39%)	0.00% (0.00%)
White Scottish	42.11% (46.15%)	50.00% (100%)
White English	10.53% (15.39%)	0.00% (0.00%)
White Irish	5.26% (0.00%)	50.00% (0.00%)
White Other	0.00% (7.69%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Other	5.26% (7.69%)	0.00% (0.00%)
PNTS	10.53% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)

A vast majority of our employees are “White Scottish”, “White British” and “White English” categories, which reflects our location. There is a similar proportion of employees from ethnic minority groups that we employ compared to the 2016 report.

The ethnicity mix within recruitment, retention and development practices closely reflects the overall make-up of our staffing, which is consistent with a fair and equal approach to our employment practices.

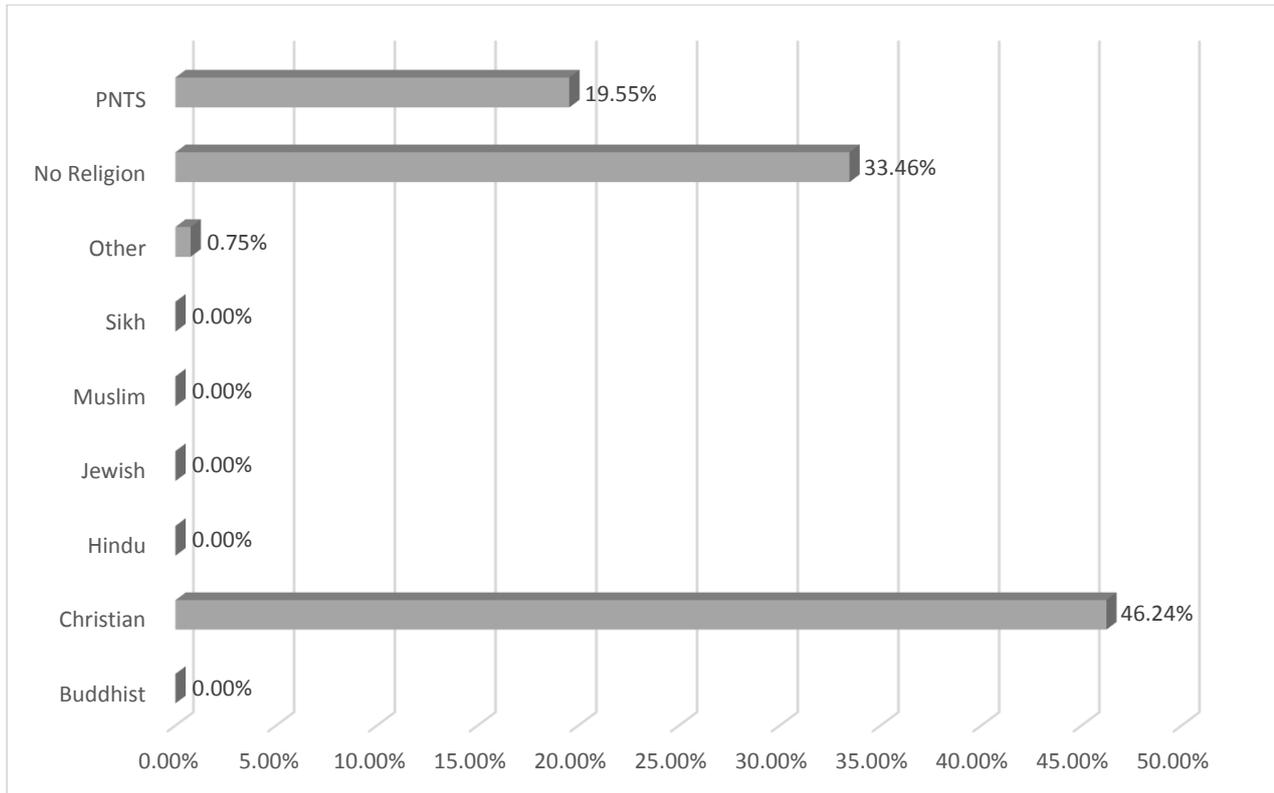
Religion and Belief

- The whole organisation as at 31 March 2017:



Religion/belief	2017 report	2016 report
Buddhist	0.22%	0.44%
Christian	40.47%	40.31%
Hindu	0.32%	0.44%
Sikh	0.32%	0.44%
Other	1.72%	1.76%
No Religion	38.97%	38.55%
PNTS	17.98%	18.06%

- **The Royal Blind School as at 31 March 2017:**



Religion/belief	2017 report	2016 report
Christian	46.24%	46.48%
Other religion	0.75%	0.70%
No religion	33.46%	33.80%
Prefer not to say	19.55%	19.02%

In the following tables figures in brackets represent the 2015-16 statistics.

- **Recruitment:**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Religion/belief	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Christian	32.14% (29.69%)	33.33% (18.18%)
Hindu	0.00% (1.56%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Jewish	0.00% (3.13%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Sikh	0.00% (1.56%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Other religion	0.00% (3.13%)	0.00% (0.00%)
No religion	42.86% (53.12%)	40.00% (72.73%)
Prefer not to say	25.00% (7.81%)	26.67% (9.09%)

Job applicants between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Religion/belief	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Buddhist	0.96% (1.05%)	1.55% (1.59%)
Christian	33.88% (29.45%)	37.31% (33.32%)
Hindu	0.41% (0.75%)	0.00% (1.59%)
Jewish	0.14% (4.78%)	0.52% (1.59%)
Muslim	1.93% (1.05%)	2.59% (0.00%)
Sikh	0.00% (6.87%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Other religion	1.52% (2.69%)	1.55% (0.00%)
No religion	51.93% (39.91%)	47.67% (47.62%)
Prefer not to say	9.23% (13.45%)	8.81% (14.29%)

• **Leavers** between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Religion/belief	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Buddhist	1.43% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Christian	27.14% (34.38%)	42.11% (43.75%)
Hindu	1.43% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Jewish	0.00% (3.12%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Sikh	1.43% (1.56%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Other religion	1.43% (3.12%)	0.00% (0.00%)
No religion	40.00% (48.44%)	31.58% (50.00%)
Prefer not to say	27.14% (9.38%)	26.32% (6.25%)

• **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Religion/belief	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Christian	26.32% (23.08%)	50.00% (0.00%)
No religion	42.11% (61.54%)	50.00% (100%)
Prefer not to say	31.58% (15.38%)	0.00% (0.00%)

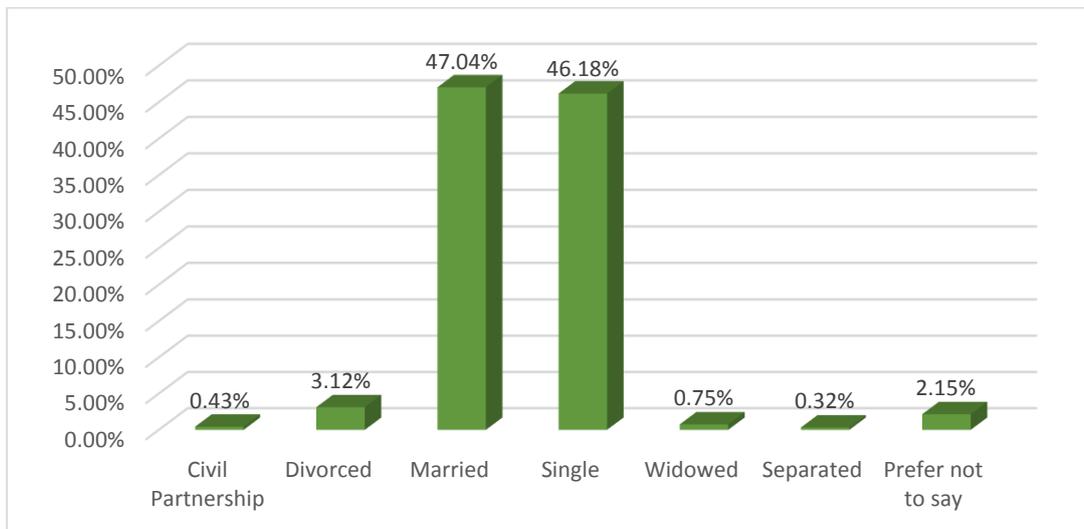
The make-up of our staffing is dominated by 'Christian' and 'No religion', and this spread is similar across all our employment practices. These proportions are similar to the figures presented in our 2016 report.

There is still a relatively high percentage of employees who prefer not to disclose their religion, 25% of new employees across the whole organisation and 26.67% of new employees at the School chose not to disclose this information.

The employee data split by religion or belief under recruitment, retention and development practices broadly corresponds to the overall make-up of our staffing.

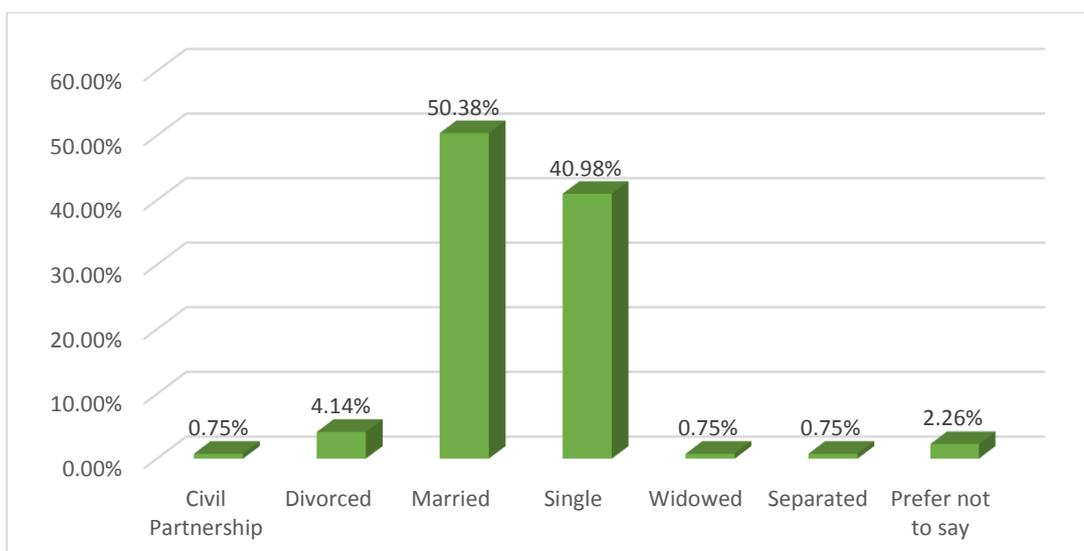
Marriage/Civil Partnership Status

- The whole organisation as at 31 March 2017:



Status	2017 report	2016 report
Civil Partnership	0.43%	0.22%
Divorced	3.12%	3.08%
Married	47.04%	47.58%
Single	46.18%	46.92%
Widowed	0.75%	0.66%
Separated	0.32%	0.22%
Prefer not to say	2.15%	0.22%

- The Royal Blind School as at 31 March 2017:



Status	2017 report	2016 report
Civil Partnership	0.75%	0.70%
Divorced	4.14%	4.23%
Married	50.38%	51.41%
Single	40.98%	40.14%
Widowed	0.75%	0.70%
Separated	0.75%	0.70%
Prefer not to say	2.26%	2.11%

In the following tables figures in brackets represent the 2015-16 statistics.

- Recruitment**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Marriage/civil partnership status	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Civil Partnership	2.38% (0.00%)	6.67% (0.00%)
Divorced	2.38% (6.25%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Married	32.14% (31.25%)	46.67% (27.27%)
Single	52.38% (60.94%)	46.67% (72.73%)
Widowed	0.00% (1.56%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Separated	1.19% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Prefer not to say	9.52% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)

Job applicants between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Marriage/civil partnership status	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Civil Partnership	2.62% (2.39%)	5.18% (1.59%)
Divorced	6.47% (2.99%)	5.70% (1.59%)
Married	26.17% (25.86%)	26.42% (36.50%)
Single	55.65% (62.18%)	52.33% (50.79%)
Widowed	0.83% (0.45%)	1.04% (1.59%)
Separated	2.62% (1.05%)	3.11% (1.59%)
Prefer not to say	5.65% (5.08%)	6.22% (6.35%)

- **Leavers** between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Marriage/civil partnership status	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Divorced	2.86% (3.13%)	5.26% (0.00%)
Married	20.00% (23.43%)	31.58% (31.25%)
Single	25.71% (65.63%)	10.53% (62.50%)
Widowed	0.00% (1.56%)	0.00% (6.25%)
Separated	0.00% (1.56%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Prefer not to say	51.43% (1.56%)	52.63% (0.00%)

- **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017:

Marriage/civil partnership status	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Married	36.84% (38.46%)	50.00% (100%)
Single	42.11% (53.85%)	50.00% (0.00%)
Widowed	0.00% (7.69%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Prefer not to say	21.05% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)

A vast majority of our staff are either 'Married' or 'Single'. We believe that the data above relating to recruitment, retention and development of our employees corresponds with fair and equal employment practices in relation to the marriage and civil partnership status.

With the law changing recently to allow those in civil partnerships to convert their status to "married" and the relatively high uptake of this, it would be conceivable that the number of employees and applications who state that they are in a civil partnership will drop over time, and that figures for "married" will rise accordingly.

Occupational Segregation – The Royal Blind School

Gender

By Occupation	Female	Male
Classroom Assistants	100%	-
Education & Learning Practitioners	100%	-
Teachers	75%	25%
Nurses	100%	-
Residential Care Staff	91%	9%
Domestic Staff	94%	6%
General staff	67%	33%

By Rate of Pay	Female	Male
£8.25 - £8.92 per hour	87%	13%
£9.43 - £9.97 per hour	94%	6%
£10.39 – £11.83 per hour	100%	-
£13.03 - £14.42 per hour	93%	7%
£15.25 – £18.96 per hour	85%	15%
£20.27 – £22.43 per hour	81%	29%
£25 per hour and above	92%	8%

NB Female staff comprise 90.23% of the School's workforce

Disability

By Occupation	Disabled	Not Disabled
Classroom Assistants	-	100%
Education & Learning Practitioners	-	100%
Teachers	7%	93%
Nurses	-	100%
Residential Care Staff	12%	88%
Domestic Staff	-	100%
General staff	17%	83%

By Rate of Pay	Disabled	Not Disabled
£8.25 - £8.92 per hour	-	100%
£9.43 - £9.97 per hour	6%	94%
£10.39 – £11.83 per hour	-	100%
£13.03 - £14.42 per hour	7%	93%
£15.25 – £18.96 per hour	8%	92%
£20.27 – £22.43 per hour	7%	93%
£25 per hour and above	17%	83%

NB Disabled staff comprise 7.52% of the School's workforce

Ethnic origin

By Occupation	BME Background	White Background	Prefer not to say
Classroom Assistants	6%	81%	13%
Education & Learning Practitioners	10%	80%	10%
Teachers	7%	79%	14%
Nurses	-	100%	-
Residential Care Staff	3%	85%	12%
Domestic Staff	12%	88%	-
General staff	18%	73%	9%

By Rate of Pay	BME Background	White Background	Prefer not to say
£8.25 - £8.92 per hour	6%	94%	-
£9.43 - £9.97 per hour	6%	82%	12%
£10.39 – £11.83 per hour	29%	71%	-
£13.03 - £14.42 per hour	4%	87%	9%
£15.25 – £18.96 per hour	8%	69%	23%
£20.27 – £22.43 per hour	14%	86%	-
£25 per hour and above	-	83%	17%

NB Staff from BME backgrounds comprise 7.52% of the School's workforce

Gender Pay Gap Information and Equal Pay Statement

- **The whole organisation as at 31 March 2017**

The average hourly rate for the whole organisation was £12.88 per hour (rising from £12.31 in 2015, when the last data was published). This was split by gender as follows:

- female employees: £12.73 per hour (rising from £12.32 in 2015)
- male employees: £13.03 per hour (rising from £12.27 in 2015)

Our male staff are now paid on average more than female (this has reversed the trend from 2015 report). However, the difference is only 2.3% which does not give cause for concern.

- **The Royal Blind School as at 31 March 2017**

Within the Royal Blind School, our overall average hourly rate was £15.93 per hour (rising from £14.17 in 2015). This was split by gender as follows:

- female employees: £14.74 per hour (rising from £14.02 in 2015)
- male employees: £17.11 per hour (rising from £15.35 in 2015).

We have a very low proportion of male employees within the School (9.23%), and the average pay difference of 16% (it was 9% in 2015) is related to the types of roles men are employed in. The table below shows a split across different staff categories of our female and male employees within the School:

	Average hourly rate	Female employees	Male employees
Domestic Staff	£8.56	14.41% (12.86%)	7.69% (0.00%)
Classroom Assistants	£9.93	14.41% (18.57%)	0.00% (11.76%)
General Staff	£12.91	7.21% (5.71%)	30.77% (23.53%)
Education & Learning Practitioners	£13.30	9.01% (7.86%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Nurses	£14.00	6.31% (5.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Residential Care Staff	£14.88	27.03% (32.14%)	23.08% (35.29%)
Teachers	£22.74	21.62% (17.86%)	38.46% (29.42%)

Teachers are our highest paid staff group within the School, with average pay significantly above the average hourly rate for the School. Nearly 40% of all male employees in the school are employed in teaching roles compared with around 20% of our female employees.

Domestic Staff and Classroom Assistants are the lowest paid groups within the School, paid significantly below the average hourly rate. Nearly 30% of all School female employees are employed in these roles, compared to under 8% of School male employees.

This explains the gap in the average hourly rates of pay between male and female employees.

The adoption of the Living Wage by the Royal Blind Group from 1 April 2015 increased the pay of our lowest paid staff, including Domestic Staff, by a higher proportion than the remaining staff Groups over the last two years. However, due to such a high proportion of the male staff working in the higher paid jobs, this has not had a direct impact on reducing the gap.

- **Equal Pay Statement**

We support and promote equality of opportunity for all staff and believe that staff should receive equal pay for work of equal value, regardless of their sex, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, age or disability.

We aim to ensure that we have procedures in place to determine pay and conditions of employment which do not discriminate unlawfully and are free from bias. We understand the benefits of operating a fair pay system which is transparent and is based on objective criteria.

We operate a payscale system which ensures that the salary and conditions for each job relate to the title and description of that job and not to any characteristic of the person carrying it out. There are no pay entitlements which benefit or disadvantage a protected group. We have a Remuneration Policy which clearly sets out the rules for determining and reviewing staff pay. The policy and any updates are subject to the Board approval.

We are committed to taking action to ensure that equal pay is in place for like work, work rated as equivalent and work of equal value. We believe that any pay gap will arise purely from differing proportions of male and female staff, disabled and non-disabled staff and persons in various racial groups in the various jobs we have.

EQUALITY OUTCOMES

Progress towards achieving Equality Outcomes set in 2013

Since we published our Equality status report in April 2013 we have been continually working towards 5 main outcomes we would like to achieve. This section of the report outlines the progress we made towards achieving each of our aspirations.

- 1. We will work towards our vision to make a significant contribution to building a community in which blind and partially sighted people, including those who also have other disabilities, are fully included and lead fulfilling lives.**

We work towards fulfilling our vision, empowering blind people to achieve their potential and a brighter future. This vision is at the core of all our activities and decision making. Specific details of how we achieve this are outlined under 'Mainstreaming equality duty' section of this report.

- 2. We would like to be more diverse than we are at present, particularly in terms of ethnicity.**

Our employee information shows an increased mix of ethnic backgrounds.

This work continues through robust and fair recruitment practices. Whilst we do not have a large proportion of employees from ethnic minorities, our proportions do fall in line with local census figures for people from ethnic minorities who live in East Central Scotland.

As Paisley has a more diverse ethnic representation it will be interesting to see if this is reflected in our recruitment and staffing for both Jenny's Well and the Hawkhead Centre when they are up and running later this year.

- 3. We would like to see more disabled people involved on our staff beyond the Scottish Braille Press, which exists partly to provide employment for those with visual and other impairments and therefore employs many in these categories.**

We employ a high proportion of disabled employees at 15% of total staff (the figure was 6.04% in 2013). Further information about our progress in these areas can be found under 'Employee Information' section of this report and under point 5 below.

It is worth noting that 1 in 5 of those who were promoted in the whole organisation during the period were disabled.

- 4. We aim to move gradually towards having a more ethnically diverse Board with a more even gender balance.**

In April 2015 we had 9 male and 7 female Board members. As at 31 March 2017 we had 9 male and 6 female Board members, which saw the gender balance of the board change slightly from 56% male and 44% female in 2015 to 60% male and 40% female in 2017. The change is solely due to a current vacancy on the Board.

Board appointments are made on the basis of skills, experience and knowledge needed to complement the existing Board membership. We aim to ensure that the Board is strong in business experience, that it has expertise in the required principal professions of education, social care and nursing and that it includes members with experience and expertise in sight loss. The appointment process and role requirements are reviewed each time a vacancy arises to ensure that the Board is well equipped to discharge its charitable duties.

5. Adoption of the two-tick symbol ‘Positive about disabled people’ in our recruitment practice, and are considering applying for Investors in People status.

We have been accredited with the Disability Confident Symbol (formerly Positive about Disabled People Two Ticks Symbol) in recognition of our commitment to good practice in employing and retaining disabled people.

This symbol shows that Royal Blind has agreed to meet five commitments in its role as an employer:

- recruitment - to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities
- consultation - to ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss, at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities
- retention – to make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment
- development – to take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make these commitments work
- review – to review annually the five commitments and what has been achieved, plan ways to improve on them and let employees and Jobcentre Plus know about progress and future plans.

We have put processes in place to ensure that these commitments are met on an ongoing basis and that they are embedded on our normal processes and day-to-day operations. This is supported by the annual renewal of our accreditation.

We place the Disability Confident symbol on all of our recruitment advertisements, application form and other relevant publications. All applicants applying for a job with Royal Blind under the scheme are guaranteed and interview if they meet the essential criteria for the job, as defined in the person specification (this also applies to internal vacancies).

All disabled staff are provided with opportunities to discuss what can be done to make sure they develop and use their abilities, through regular supervision/one-to-one meetings and annual appraisals.

For our employees who become disabled or whose level of disability changes in the course of their employment, and there are aspects of their present role that make it difficult for them to carry on the same work, we do all we can to make sure these employees can stay in their job.

Equality Outcomes for the period 2017 - 2021

We are committed to continuously improving our performance in attaining equality in our employment practice. We have taken steps to raise staff awareness around equal opportunities and gather staff feedback on what we can do to continuously progress in this area.

In February of 2017 we became accredited as an Investor in People. In terms of the IIP Framework this means that, as an employer, we:

“Recognise that everyone is treated with dignity and respect, regardless of race, gender, disability, sexuality, religion or belief, age, marital status or other personal characteristics. In terms of learning and development, equality means recognising that different groups have different needs, and ensuring that they have appropriate and fair access to appropriate opportunities.”

This is a major achievement for the organisation in terms of the good practice that is happening across the whole of the Royal Blind Group, but the benefits in terms of equality show that we are making good progress in this vitally important area.

We operate an Equality Forum with representatives from various minority backgrounds, from the different services we operate. The Forum has been meeting regularly over the past two years. The aim of this forum is to act as a reference panel to assess our policies, progress against our aims and to bring forward ideas which will help us improve equality in our employment practice. Taking into account other staff feedback coming directly from the services, the Equality Forum was instrumental in establishing our equality outcomes for the next four years.

We decided to maintain the first three objectives from the previous period as although we made good progress in those areas, we feel they are still very relevant and would like to maintain these as our priorities.

1. We will work towards our vision to make a significant contribution to building a community in which blind and partially sighted people, including those who also have other disabilities, are fully included and lead fulfilling lives.
2. We would like to be more diverse than we are at present, particularly in terms of ethnicity.
3. We aim to move gradually towards having a more ethnically diverse Board with a more even gender balance.
4. We will roll out Dignity at Work staff training for all departments. The training includes a specific session on creating a culture of equality and acceptance of difference in the workplace.

5. We will maintain our Disability Confident Symbol (formerly Positive about Disabled People Two Ticks Symbol) to recognise our commitment to good practice in employing and retaining disabled people. We will investigate the feasibility of “upgrading” our membership to the Level 2 or Level 3 status. This will involve increasing the commitment we have to employing, developing and retaining disabled staff.
6. We would like to increase the number of visually impaired staff we employ. This will include revising the documentation and processes we use to recruit staff by making these more “friendly” for visually impaired applicants.

Further implementation and monitoring

We will continue to:

- apply the principles of equality to all our activity including our service delivery, our staffing and our management and governance
- monitor and use employee information to ensure improved equality and diversity across the organisation
- work towards achieving our key equality outcomes over the next two years with the continued support of the Equality Forum.

We will publish a Report on Employee Information in April 2018.

The next full Equality Status Report will be published in April 2019. The report will include the following elements:

- Mainstreaming the equality duty
- Employee information
- Gender pay gap information
- Progress towards achieving our equality outcomes.