

Equality Status Report

Published 28 April 2021

Introduction

Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans (previously operating as Royal Blind and Scottish War Blinded) promote the inclusion and empowerment of people with visual impairment, and as such regard inclusion, diversity and 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
 - gender pay gap information for the Royal Blind School.
- Progress towards achieving our equality outcomes. This includes information on our Board diversity.

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

Our purpose is to be there for people with sight loss in Scotland because we believe that everyone with sight loss deserves the opportunity to lead a fulfilling life.

Sight Scotland services range from providing specialist education to blind pupils, to residential care and document transcription to enable visually impaired people to access vital documents such as bank statements. Sight Scotland Veterans services support around 1,400 veterans through our outreach service and two activity centres.

We know that there are significantly more people in Scotland who could benefit from our life-changing help and we are determined to improve, grow and diversify our services to be able to reach them. We have set ourselves an ambitious long-term goal: to expand our reach across Scotland to support and empower everyone affected by sight loss.

How we integrate equality into the exercise of our functions

We are determined that no-one should face sight loss alone. Our mission is to reach everyone in Scotland with sight loss – where and when they need us.

Values

Inclusion, equality and diversity 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 members (2.4%) with visual impairment and ensure appropriate representation of our service users' interests in all our governance decisions. We currently employ 9 staff (2.3%) with declared visual impairment. All new employees receive Visual Impairment Awareness Training, with more in-depth specialised training provided regularly within the relevant services.

Inclusion, equality and diversity 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 operate a Diversity and Inclusion Forum with representatives from various minority backgrounds, from across our two charities. The aim of this forum is to act as a reference panel to assess our policies and practices, to review progress against our aims and to bring forward ideas which will help us improve equality in our employment practice.

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 colleagues at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, opportunities for promotion, learning 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 colleague 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 relevant grievance or disciplinary procedures. We run in-house Dignity at Work training, which is mandatory for all staff.

We hold Investors in People accreditations, which is an indication of how well we are “living our values” as an organisation. Feedback gathered from staff during the assessments 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; we anonymise job applications at shortlisting stage and ensure that shortlisting of applicants is done by more than one person to avoid unconscious bias.

All managers involved in interviews undergo our Recruitment Interview Skills training course, which includes an exploration of how biases, whether conscious or unconscious, can affect decision making during recruitment leading to direct or indirect discrimination. The training helps our managers develop self-awareness and recognise unconscious bias in recruitment.

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

Our central Learning and Development function leads the development and delivery of quality learning and organisational development opportunities, ensuring best practice and consistency across the organisation.

Individual staff training needs are identified through regular staff supervision and appraisals. All staff are given appropriate access to training (through our Learning Management System) 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.

Our People Development Steering Group, established in 2019, helps ensure fairness in our approach to learning and development. The remit of this steering group is to:

- act as a strategic advisory group to L&D on ensuring that staff and volunteers have appropriate skills and knowledge to be effective in their roles

- help map mandatory training at organisational as well as service and role specific levels to ensure compliance and help drive and sustain excellence in key areas across services
- help analyse training needs across the organisation, identifying existing gaps and prioritising effectively to inform the annual training calendar (including e-learning courses) and long-term L&D priorities to ensure that they support the strategic priorities
- work across the organisation to support the transition from a localised L&D approach to an organisation-wide one, ensuring that learning and best practice are shared and that charity resources are utilised effectively.

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 engage with Access to Work for additional support as and when required.

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 people. Wherever possible, 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

Research and Policy

We take forward research through working with blind and partially sighted people to understand what issues matter most to them. This enables us to understand what needs to change so that we improve support and achieve a more inclusive society for visually impaired people and make the case for that change. We involve people living with sight loss in our research, and work with them to be their own champions for change through political engagements, contributions at policy conferences and appearances in the media.

In recent years we have researched the views and experiences of hundreds of blind and partially sighted people on a range of issues, from loneliness and mental health to their experience of the pandemic. We have published reports on the findings of our research and campaigned in parliament and in the media for policy changes and support to address these issues. During the Coronavirus pandemic we took forward research and policy engagement which highlighted how the human rights of blind and partially sighted people were specifically affected. We have campaigned for the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to be incorporated into Scots Law.

We campaign on specific policy areas where visually impaired people experience inequality, including educational attainment and employment opportunities, and work for positive change in these areas through specialist education support, the provision of supported employment, and promoting greater awareness of visual impairment amongst employers and in public services. We seek to empower blind and partially sighted people through the provision of information and advice, and through campaigning for the provision of inclusive communication.

Our specialist rehabilitation and habilitation staff work with blind and partially sighted people of all ages so that they can learn to self-manage their condition and use adaptive aids and equipment. This helps ensure they can participate in learning, employment, activities in their communities, and live independently. We provide person-centred care and support for visually impaired people with complex needs.

We also support pioneering medical research to improve diagnosis and treatment of eye conditions so that fewer people are affected by sight loss in the future. From innovative use of artificial intelligence to the ground-breaking development of gene therapies, each year we provide crucial funding to support clinical research.

Sight Scotland:

- **Learning**

Sight Scotland is a specialist provider of learning and education opportunities for children and young people who are blind or partially sighted. We believe every child

and young person should be supported to learn in the setting that is most appropriate to them.

Children and young people are at the centre of our approach. We customise learning to adapt to the unique abilities of every pupil. We want children and young people to discover and develop their abilities in preparation for their fullest possible life.

The Royal Blind School provides specialist education, care and learning to children and young people with visual impairment, including those with additional complex needs.

Our personalised approach to learning, care and education supports children and young people to maximise their potential and reach their goals. We enable children and young people to thrive and develop skills for life. Our team works with each pupil to develop an individual programme to grow their confidence and independence.

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 buildings have been designed purposefully to be an accessible environment for children and young people with sensory impairment and complex needs. As such, our building designs include wide corridors, colour contrasts, handrails to facilitate independent navigation, and fully equipped accessible bathrooms. Our facilities include a hydrotherapy pool, multi-sensory lights room, soft play area, enclosed multi-use games area, sensory gardens, log cabin and fire pit.

We ensure that pupils have a broad range of opportunities and experiences to enable them to become successful learners, responsible citizens, confident individuals and effective contributors to society.

Through our **outreach work**, we provide support for pupils in education across Scotland. We empower educators and families by sharing our knowledge and experience of specialist education.

We currently support pupils in East Lothian, Orkney Island and Midlothian. Through our support, our partners in education are equipped with the strategies, tools and understanding of visual impairment to enable blind and partially sighted pupils in all settings to access the curriculum.

Our approach extends to life outside the classroom. We focus on equipping parents, teachers and pupils with strategies and instil confidence by incorporating skills for life, like mobility and independent living, into the school day and life at home and beyond.

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.

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 ways with aspects of our lives. It is a priority for us to welcome children with visual impairment. We want every child to get the opportunity to try new things, make new friends and go on adventures. We are proud to be a fully accessible and inclusive place to learn and play.

As leaders in inclusive play and learning, we want to enable more children with disabilities to access and be included in opportunities, as well as provide more opportunities for children with and without disabilities to play and learn together.

- **Care**

We are committed to providing extraordinary specialist care, every day, to enable people to live fulfilling lives and live in warm, safe surroundings. We provide support in our homes so that people can gain skills, make their own choices and build connections.

We offer **residential care at the Royal Blind School** for children and young people with complex needs who need this specialist support and stability. Each of our small homes provides the opportunity to realise positive outcomes for all.

We are dedicated to delivering a full offering to our children, enabling them to develop socially and build resilience ready for adulthood.

Our 24-hour curriculum ensures that learning takes place in the wide range of situations and activities experienced during a typical day. We offer a broad array of after-school groups. Scouts, karate and choir are just a few of the many options open to our children. There is a range of adventures and activities on offer such as concerts, horse riding and skiing. We engage and challenge our children and enable them to thrive.

We provide personalised **residential care for adults** with visual impairment and additional disabilities in Forward Vision and Allermuir. We recognise that young adults with complex needs benefit from ongoing support and care to achieve their ambitions and goals. Our personalised care encourages independent living skills and full participation in daily life choices.

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 help to change the public perception of what young adults with significant complex needs can achieve.

- **Community**

We want to reach people with sight loss in every community across Scotland, working in partnership with local organisations across sectors. We are in the process of developing community-focused services that support people of all ages and at all stages of sight loss.

Our **Family Wellbeing Service**, launched in January 2021, offers a range of support to help people with sight loss and their family members to access information, advice, practical and emotional help. The service will offer a telephone support line, equipment lending, digital and published resources and direct support to families caring for a loved one with sight loss regardless of age.

From 1 April 2021, we have been awarded local authority contracts to provide specialist local services to people with sight loss who live in Edinburgh, Midlothian and East Lothian. Our **Rehabilitation and Mobility Team** will provide practical guidance to help people with sight loss keep doing the everyday things that are important to them, develop essential skills to live safely at home, and to navigate the world with confidence.

- **Enterprise**

As a leading provider of accessible media for businesses and individuals, the **Scottish Braille Press's** transcription services offer visually impaired customers independence and security. We enable companies to communicate with blind and partially sighted customers in the format of their choice. Our award-winning team provide a fast, secure and accurate service, helping businesses treat their customers fairly and comply with equality laws.

We reinvest our profits to help fund Sight Scotland's support for people adapting to sight loss. Today we are building on our heritage to create new social enterprises and charitable activities.

Sight Scotland Veterans:

Sight Scotland Veterans provide support to empower service veterans affected by sight loss to regain confidence, restore independence and make new connections. We know that everyone faces different challenges and that everyone's goals are individual. That is why our team works with everyone in the way which is right for them.

We give support that ranges from practical advice and identifying solutions that help veterans stay as independent as possible, to vital emotional support and opportunities to meet others facing sight loss.

Our rehabilitation and outreach teams support our veterans across Scotland by providing information and advice, helping them live safely and independently and stay connected with their communities. Whether it is getting to grips with a hobby like model making that has been cast aside, or getting safely to and from the shops, our team equips veterans with the skills and tools to thrive and live the life they want.

Our colleagues at our Hawkhead and Linburn Centres create a vibrant community of their own enabling our veterans to reconnect with their passions. The centres have 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 visual impairment. Some of our activities include a skills kitchen to support members in cooking and life skills, arts and crafts, gardening, woodwork workshops, digital skills, sports (e.g. acoustic shooting, archery and bowling) and experiences such as white-water rafting, tank driving, 4 x 4 driving, motor biking, abseiling, gliding.

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
- gender pay gap information.

Gathering and using employee information

We 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 might be at risk of being 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 anonymised, it is not visible to the shortlisting/interview panel and is kept solely for the purpose of equal opportunities monitoring.

New employees are asked to update their diversity and inclusion data during their induction. All staff can view and easily update their personal information that we keep through self-service functionality of our HR system. We work to ensure that our staff are aware why we gather and keep this information.

We also 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.

We 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 of 31 March 2021, we employed a total of 389 staff, out of whom 233 (59.90%) worked full time and 156 (40.10%) worked part time. These figures have changed when compared to 2020 when we employed 630 staff, of whom 42.54% worked full time and 57.46% part time. The changes are linked primarily to the closure of the two care homes which employed a proportionally higher percentage of part time employees. At time of closing, Jenny's Well had 87.87% employees working part time and Braeside House had 93.10% working part time.

Within the Royal Blind School, we employed 95 staff, out of whom 44 (46.32%) worked full time and 51 (53.68%) worked part time. These proportions are relatively unchanged from 2020 when the split was 45.74% full time and 54.26% part time. The reduction in employee numbers at the school from 129 in 2020 is linked to the staff restructure last year.

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

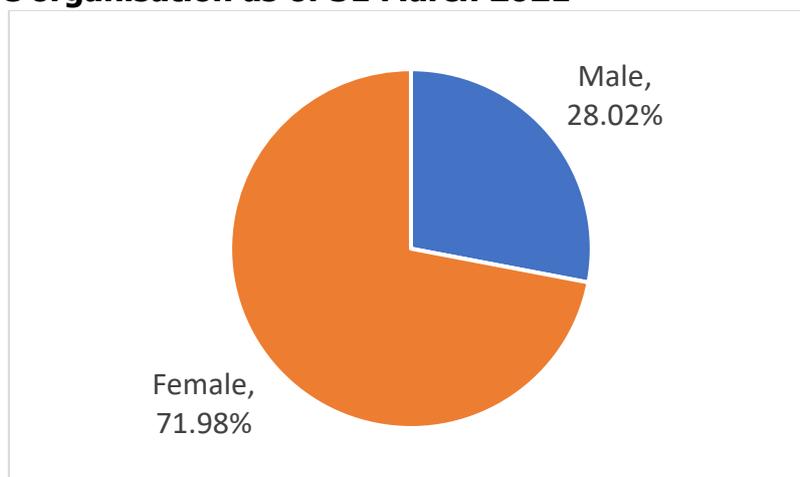
The employment information presented in this report covers the last 12 months since our last Employee Information Report was published in July 2020. Under each protected characteristic, we have provided the following information:

- the overall composition of our employees as of 31 March 2021
- comparison with the 2020 and 2019 reports, where information relating to the particular characteristic was included in the previous report
- new employees appointed between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021
- job applicants between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021
- leavers between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021
- employees promoted internally between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021.

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.

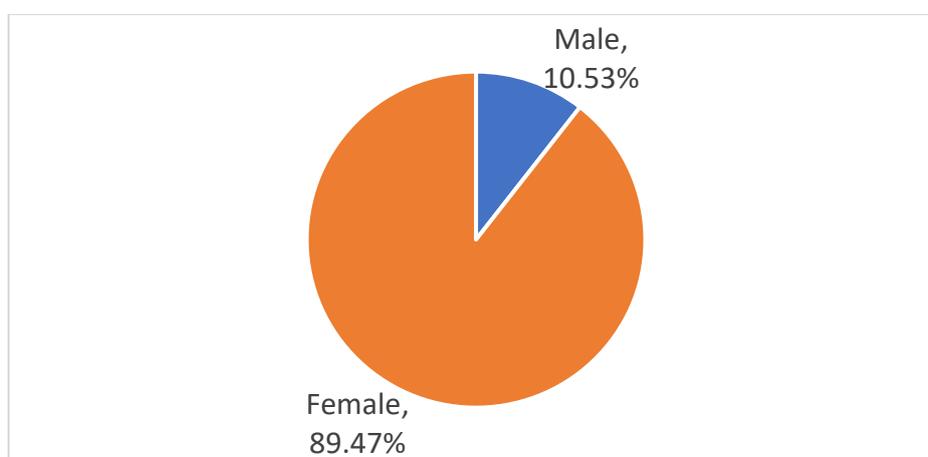
Gender

- **The whole organisation as of 31 March 2021**



Gender	2021 report	2020 report	2019 report
Female	71.98%	77.46%	78.02%
Male	28.02%	22.54%	21.98%

- **The Royal Blind School as of 31 March 2021:**



Gender	2021 report	2020 report	2019 report
Female	89.47%	89.15%	89.29%
Male	10.53%	10.85%	10.71%

In the following tables figures in brackets represent the 2019-20 statistics.

- **Recruitment**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Gender	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Female	75.00% (67.74%)	66.67 (100.00%)
Male	25.00% (32.26%)	33.33% (0.00%)

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

Job applicants between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Gender	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Female	65.87% (67.27%)	74.47% (40.00%)
Male	31.74% (29.14%)	21.28% (40.00%)
Prefer not to say	2.39% (3.59%)	4.26% (20.00%)

- **Leavers** between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Gender	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Female	84.79% (70.59%)	88.57% (88.89%)
Male	15.21% (29.41%)	11.43% (11.11%)

- **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Gender	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Female	100.00% (92.31%)	100.00% (100.00%)
Male	0.00% (7.69%)	0.00% (0.00%)

A vast majority of our employees are female. This reflects the typical gender mix in the activities we operate, which are mostly within the care and education sector. The overall gender split in the care sector, as reported by SSSC, was 85% female and 15% male in 2019.

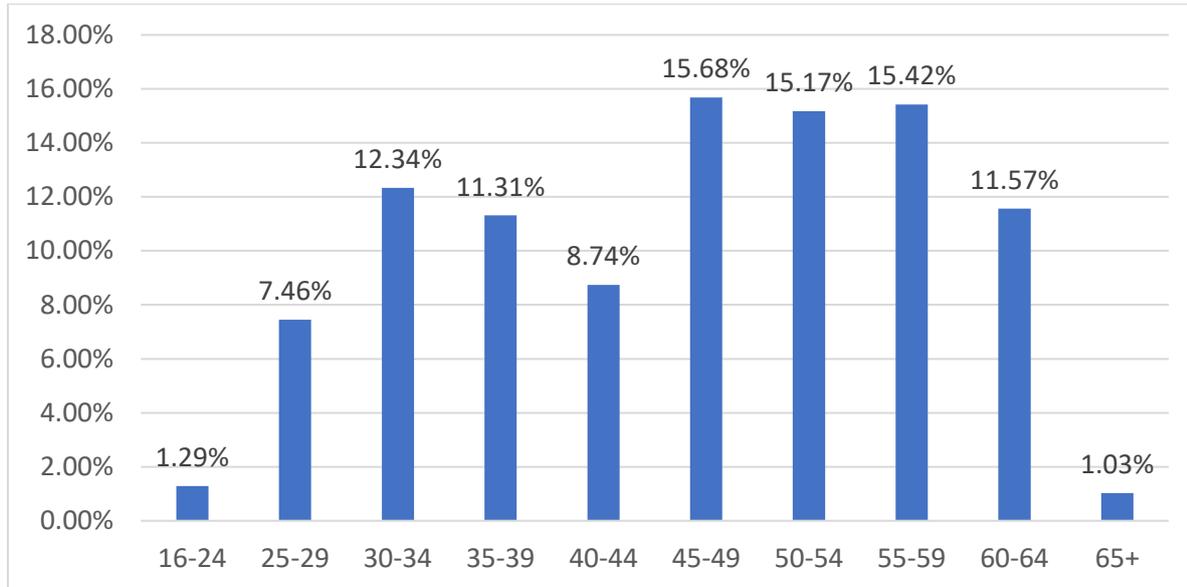
The gender mix for the whole organisation is at a similar level as in April 2020 with a small rise in the number of men employed. In terms of the school specifically, the proportion of male employees compared to female staff decreased slightly from 10.85% in 2020 to 10.53% in 2021. No male employees were promoted internally

this year, but this is influenced by a very low number of staff in this group over the past year (only four employees were promoted within Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans, only one of these employees worked within the school).

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

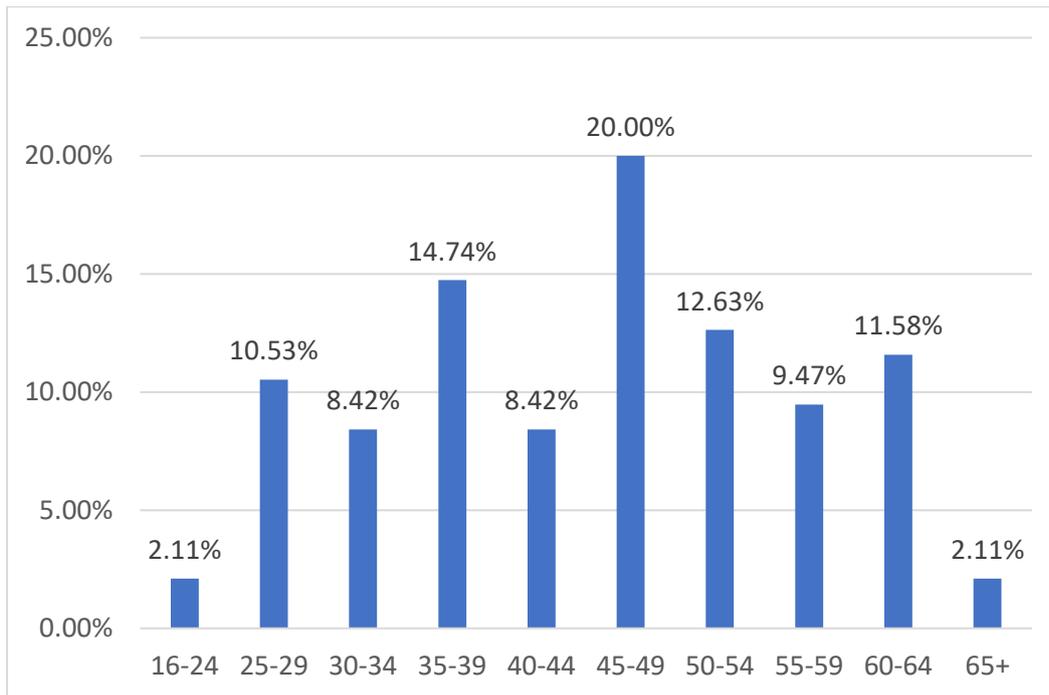
Age

- **The whole organisation as of 31 March 2021:**



Age	2021 report	2020 report	2019 report
16-24	1.29%	2.86%	4.08%
25-29	7.46%	9.05%	9.58%
30-34	12.34%	11.27%	12.09%
35-39	11.31%	10.32%	9.58%
40-44	8.74%	8.73%	8.48%
45-49	15.68%	13.49%	12.72%
50-54	15.17%	15.08%	16.48%
55-59	15.42%	16.19%	16.17%
60-64	11.57%	11.11%	9.42%
65+	1.03%	1.90%	1.41%

- **The Royal Blind School as of 31 March 2021:**



Age	2021 report	2020 report	2019 report
16-24	2.11%	0.78%	5.71%
25-29	10.53%	10.85%	10.00%
30-34	8.42%	7.75%	7.86%
35-39	14.74%	12.40%	10.71%
40-44	8.42%	10.08%	10.71%
45-49	20.00%	16.28%	12.86%
50-54	12.63%	13.18%	13.57%
55-59	9.47%	10.08%	16.43%
60-64	11.58%	14.73%	10.00%
65+	2.11%	3.88%	2.14%

In the following tables figures in brackets represent the 2019 - 2020 statistics.

- **Age at recruitment**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Age	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
16-24	12.50% (10.75%)	16.67% (0.00%)
25-29	16.67% (10.75%)	16.67% (0.00%)
30-34	12.50% (8.60%)	0.00% (0.00%)
35-39	12.50% (13.98%)	16.67% (0.00%)
40-44	0.00% (9.68%)	0.00% (66.67%)
45-49	16.67% (12.90%)	33.33% (3.33%)
50-54	8.33% (22.58%)	0.00% (0.00%)
55-59	16.67% (6.45%)	16.67% (0.00%)
60-64	4.17% (2.15%)	0.00% (0.00%)
65+	0.00% (2.15%)	0.00% (0.00%)

Job applicants between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Age	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
16-24	21.37% (13.35%)	17.02% (20.00%)
25-29	26.48% (16.17%)	23.40% (20.00%)
30-34	14.99% (10.65%)	17.02% (20.00%)
35-39	10.85% (13.86%)	8.51% (10.00%)
40-44	6.86% (9.37%)	8.51% (10.00%)
45-49	6.38% (9.63%)	14.89% (10.00%)
50-54	5.90% (11.55%)	6.38% (10.00%)
55-59	4.78% (9.88%)	2.13% (0.00%)
60-64	0.96% (4.11%)	2.13% (0.00%)
65+	0.16% (0.26%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Prefer not to say	1.28% (1.16%)	0.00% (0.00%)

- **Leavers** between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Age	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
16-24	5.70% (6.72%)	2.86% (11.11%)

25-29	10.27% (10.08%)	11.43% (0.00%)
30-34	9.89% (14.29%)	5.71% (5.56%)
35-39	9.13% (10.92%)	8.57% (5.56%)
40-44	7.22% (8.40%)	5.71% (5.56%)
45-49	9.51% (5.04%)	8.57% (5.56%)
50-54	12.93% (14.29%)	24.29% (27.78%)
55-59	20.91% (10.08%)	11.43% (16.67%)
60-64	11.79% (13.45%)	22.86% (16.67%)
65+	2.66% (0.00%)	8.57% (0.00%)

- **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Age	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
16-24	0.00% (3.85%)	0.00% (0.00%)
25-29	0.00% (15.38%)	0.00% (0.00%)
30-34	50.00% (11.54%)	0.00% (0.00%)
35-39	0.00% (19.23%)	0.00% (50.00%)
40-44	25.00% (15.38%)	100.00% (50.00%)
45-49	25.00% (7.69%)	0.00% (0.00%)
50-54	0.00% (11.54%)	0.00% (0.00%)
55-59	0.00% (15.38%)	0.00% (0.00%)
60-64	0.00% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
65+	0.00% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)

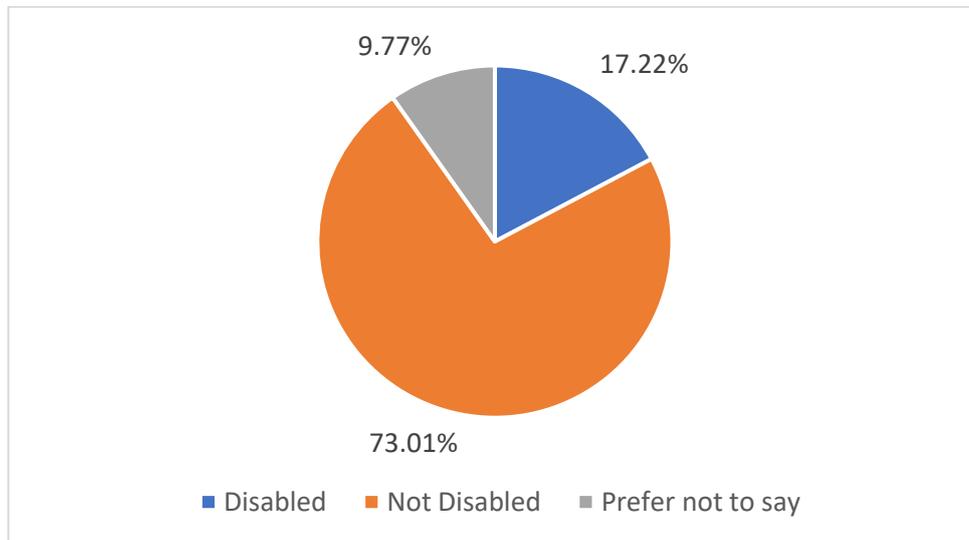
We have a balance of employees of different ages across the organisation. The lower representation of the 16-24 age group is influenced by the qualification requirements for a lot of our positions, dictated by the sectors we operate in. The increase in the number of new employees appointed from this age group compared to last year is worth noting.

The age bracket for 45 to 49 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 Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans. This, in turn shows the fairness of our current recruitment processes.

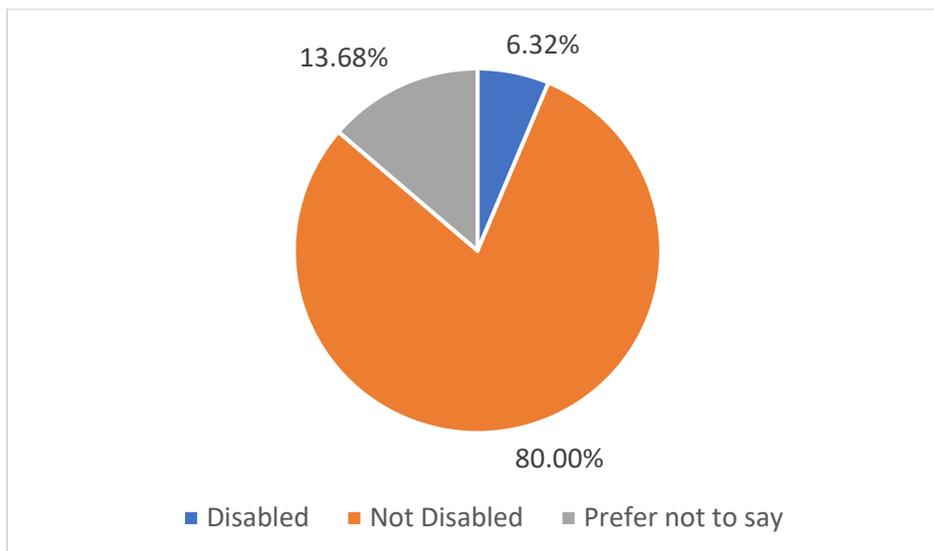
Disability

- **The whole organisation as of 31 March 2021:**



Disability status	2021 report	2020 report	2019 report
Disabled	17.22%	12.22%	11.62%
Not disabled	73.01%	77.30%	85.71%
Prefer not to say	9.77%	10.48%	2.67%

- **The Royal Blind School as of 31 March 2021:**



Disability status	2021 report	2020 report	2019 report
Disabled	6.32%	6.20%	5.00%
Not disabled	80.00%	86.82%	90.00%

Prefer not to say	13.68%	6.98%	5.00%
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In the following tables figures in brackets represent the 2019-20 statistics.

- **Recruitment**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Disability status	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Disabled	12.50% (4.30%)	33.33% (0.00%)
Not disabled	54.17% (61.29%)	33.33% (33.33%)
Prefer not to say	33.33% (34.41%)	33.33% (66.67%)

Job applicants appointed between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Disability status	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Disabled	8.29% (5.91%)	4.26% (10.00%)
Not disabled	86.44% (89.47%)	93.62% (80.00%)
Prefer not to say	5.26% (4.62%)	2.13% (10.00%)

- **Leavers** between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Disability status	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Disabled	15.97% (18.99%)	5.56% (15.38%)
Not disabled	67.23% (69.62%)	88.89% (76.92%)
Prefer not to say	16.81% (11.39%)	5.56% (7.69%)

- **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

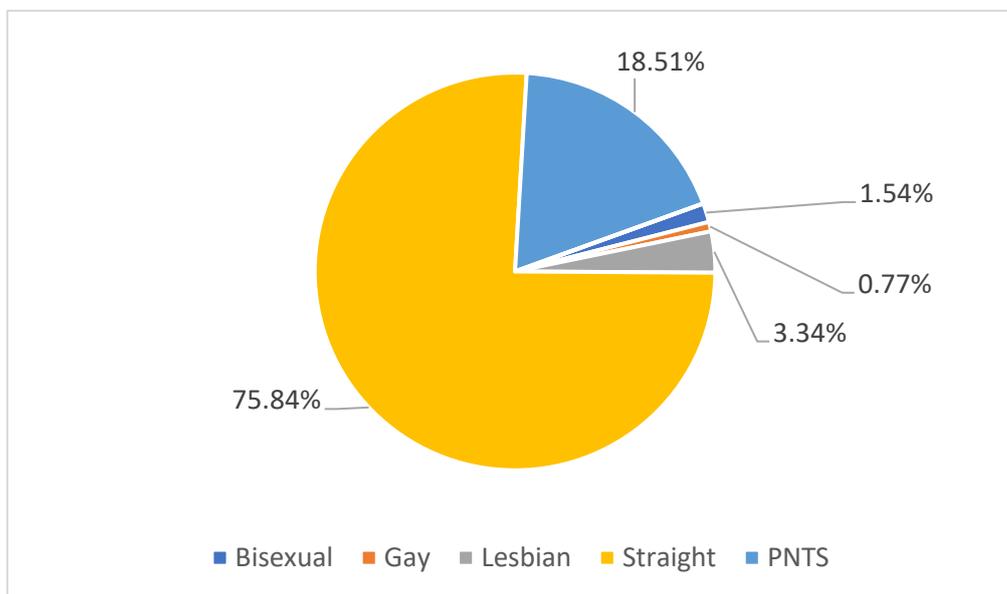
Disability status	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Disabled	0.00% (11.54%)	0% (0.00%)
Not disabled	100.00% (73.08%)	100.00% (100.00%)
Prefer not to say	0.00% (15.38%)	0% (0.00%)

There has been a slight increase in the proportion of disabled staff we employ, from 12.22% in 2020 to 17.22% in 2021. The proportion of disabled staff within the Royal Blind School has remained at a similar level, 6.20% in 2020 and 6.32% in 2021.

The proportion of leavers with a disability in this reporting period is slightly lower than in 2020 and slightly lower than the proportion of disabled staff employed by us.

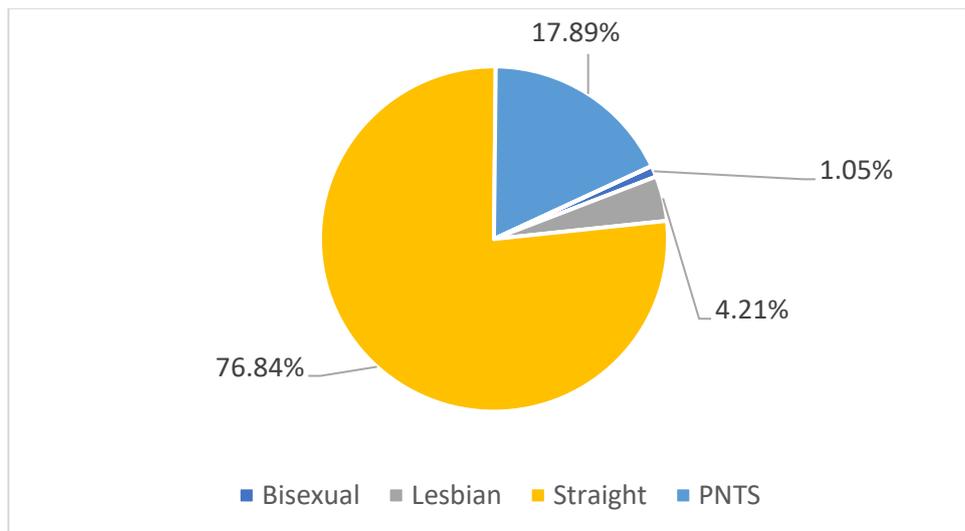
Sexual Orientation

- **The whole organisation as of 31 March 2021:**



Sexual orientation	2021 report	2020 report	2019 report
Bisexual	1.54%	1.11%	0.78%
Gay	0.77%	0.63%	1.26%
Lesbian	3.34%	2.22%	2.04%
Heterosexual/straight	75.84%	76.83%	79.59%
Pansexual	-	-	0.16%
Queer	-	-	0.16%
Prefer not to say	18.51%	19.21%	16.01%

- **The Royal Blind School as of 31 March 2021:**



Sexual orientation	2021 report	2020 report	2019 report
Bisexual	1.05%	0.78%	0.71%
Gay	0.00%	0.78%	0.71%
Lesbian	4.21%	3.88%	3.57%
Heterosexual/straight	76.84%	79.07%	80.71%
Prefer not to say	17.89%	15.50%	14.29%

In the following tables figures in brackets represent the 2019-20 statistics.

- **Recruitment**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Sexual orientation	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Bisexual	12.50% (3.23%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Gay	0.00% (1.08%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Lesbian	0.00% (1.08%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Heterosexual/straight	66.67% (55.91%)	83.33% (66.67%)
Prefer not to say	20.83% (38.71%)	16.67% (33.33%)

Job applicants between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Sexual orientation	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Bisexual	4.63% (2.31%)	4.26% (0.00%)
Gay	3.19% (2.82%)	6.38% (10.00%)

Lesbian	2.55% (1.41%)	2.13% (0.00%)
Heterosexual/straight	81.66% (83.95%)	82.98% (70.00%)
Prefer not to say	7.18% (9.50%)	2.13% (20.00%)

- **Leavers** between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Sexual orientation	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Bisexual	1.52% (0.84%)	0.00% (7.69%)
Gay	0.38% (4.20%)	2.86% (0.00%)
Lesbian	0.38% (0.00%)	2.86% (0.00%)
Heterosexual/straight	77.95% (71.43%)	85.71% (84.62%)
Prefer not to say	19.77% (21.85%)	8.57% (7.69%)
Pansexual	0.00% (0.84%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Queer	0.00% (0.84%)	0.00% (0.00%)

- **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020:

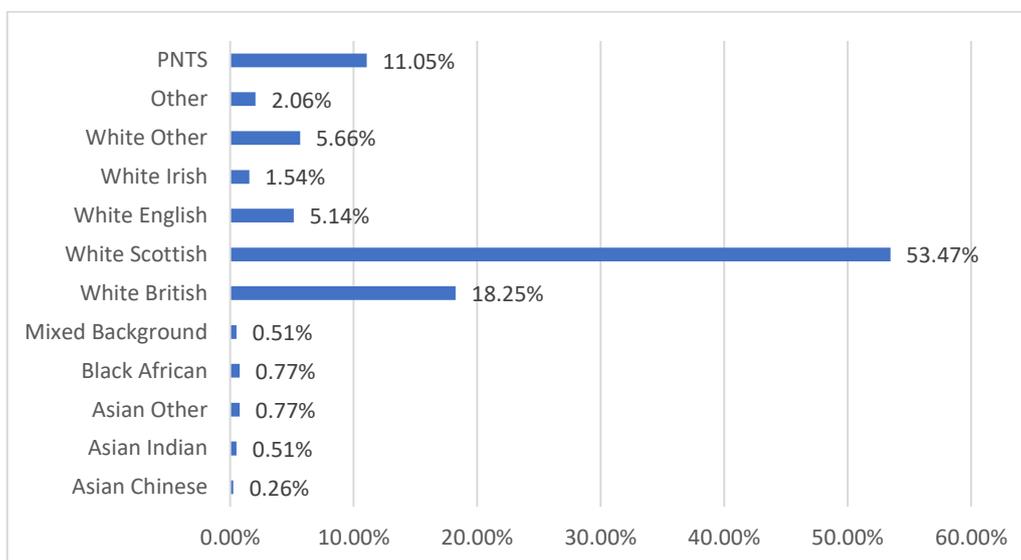
Sexual orientation	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Lesbian	0.00% (3.85%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Heterosexual/straight	100.00% (84.62%)	100.00% (50.00%)
Prefer not to say	0.00% (11.54%)	0.00% (50.00%)

There is still a relatively high proportion of staff who prefer not to declare their sexual orientation, but the proportion is slightly decreased from 19.21% in 2020 to 18.51% in 2021. There has been a decrease in the proportion of new employees who prefer not to disclose their sexual orientation from 38.71% in 2020 to 20.83% in 2021.

The general make-up of our staffing split by sexual orientation corresponds to the data presented under recruitment, retention and development practices.

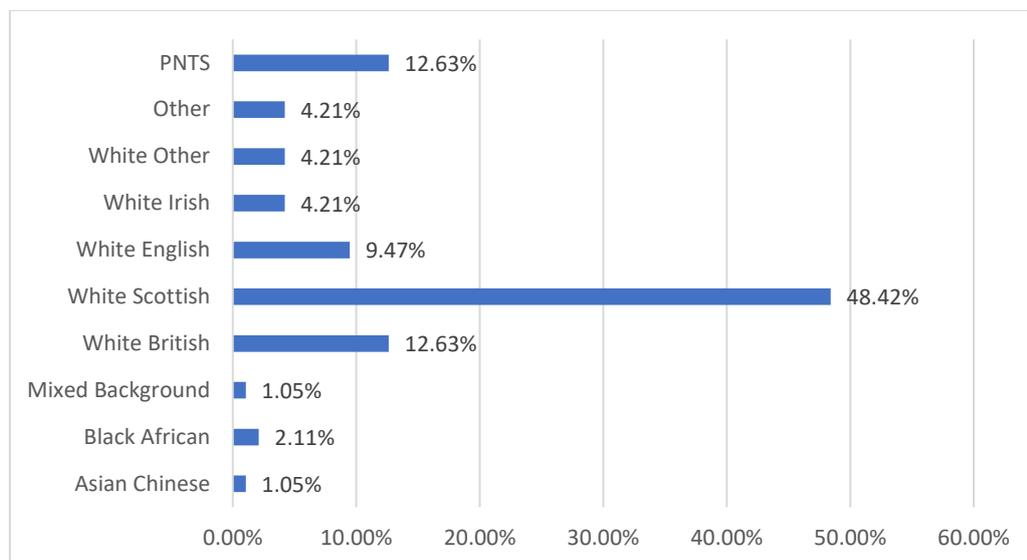
Ethnic Origin

- The whole organisation as of 31 March 2021:**



Ethnic origin	2021 report	2020 report	2019 report
Asian Chinese	0.26%	0.48%	0.47%
Asian Indian	0.51%	0.48%	0.16%
Asian Pakistan	0.00%	0.16%	0.00%
Asian Other	0.77%	0.63%	0.78%
Black African	0.77%	0.63%	0.63%
Mixed Background	0.51%	0.48%	0.63%
White British	18.25%	19.05%	16.95%
White Scottish	53.47%	54.44%	57.46%
White English	5.14%	4.60%	4.71%
White Irish	1.54%	1.43%	1.41%
White Other	5.66%	5.87%	5.97%
Other	2.06%	1.90%	2.20%
Prefer not to say	11.05%	9.84%	8.63%

- **The Royal Blind School as of 31 March 2021:**



Ethnic origin	2021 report	2020 report	2019 report
Asian Chinese	1.05%	0.78%	0.71%
Black African	2.11%	1.55%	1.43%
Mixed Background	1.05%	0.78%	0.71%
White British	12.63%	11.63%	12.86%
White Scottish	48.42%	53.49%	52.86%
White English	9.47%	8.53%	7.86%
White Irish	4.21%	3.88%	3.57%
White Other	4.21%	4.65%	5.00%
Other	4.21%	4.65%	5.00%
Prefer not to say	12.63%	10.08%	10.00%

In the following tables figures in brackets represent the 2019-20 statistics.

- **Recruitment:**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Ethnic origin	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Asian Chinese	4.17% (0.00%)	16.67% (0.00%)
Asian Indian	0.00% (2.15%)	0.00% (0.00%)

Asian Pakistan	0.00% (1.08%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Black African	0.00% (1.08%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Mixed Background	0.00% (1.08%)	0.00% (0.00%)
White British	37.50% (39.78%)	16.67% (33.33%)
White Scottish	12.50% (26.88%)	0.00% (66.67%)
White English	0.00% (3.23%)	0.00% (0.00%)
White Other	4.17% (5.38%)	16.67% (0.00%)
Prefer not to say	41.67% (19.35%)	50.00% (0.00%)

Job applicants between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Ethnic origin	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Asian Chinese	0.80% (0.26%)	2.13% (0.00%)
Asian Indian	1.44% (1.54%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Asian Pakistani	0.96% (0.26%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Asian Other	1.12% (0.77%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Black African	2.07% (3.47%)	6.38% (0.00%)
Black Caribbean	0.16% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Black Other	0.00% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Mixed Background	1.28% (1.93%)	0.00% (0.00%)
White British	25.20% (33.50%)	31.91% (50.00%)
White Scottish	32.70% (46.85%)	21.28% (30.00%)
White English	2.39% (1.28)	4.26% (10.00%)
White Irish	1.91% (0.26%)	2.13% (0.00%)
White Welsh	0.32% (0.13%)	0.00% (0.00%)
White Other	19.46% (7.45%)	25.53% (10.00%)
Other	8.61% (0.39%)	6.38% (0.00%)
Prefer not to say	1.59% (1.93%)	0.00% (0.00%)

• **Leavers** between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Ethnic origin	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Asian Chinese	1.14% (0.00%)	2.86% (0.00%)
Asian Indian	0.38% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)

Asian Pakistan	0.38% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Asian Other	0.00% (0.84%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Black African	0.38% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Mixed Background	0.76% (1.68%)	0.00% (0.00%)
White British	21.67% (25.21%)	11.43% (22.22%)
White Scottish	50.57% (47.06%)	51.43% (61.11%)
White English	3.42% (3.36%)	5.71% (0.00%)
White Irish	1.14% (0.84%)	2.86% (0.00%)
White Other	6.08% (5.88%)	8.57% (5.56%)
Other	3.04% (1.68%)	8.57% (5.56%)
Prefer not to say	11.03% (13.45%)	8.57% (5.56%)

- **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

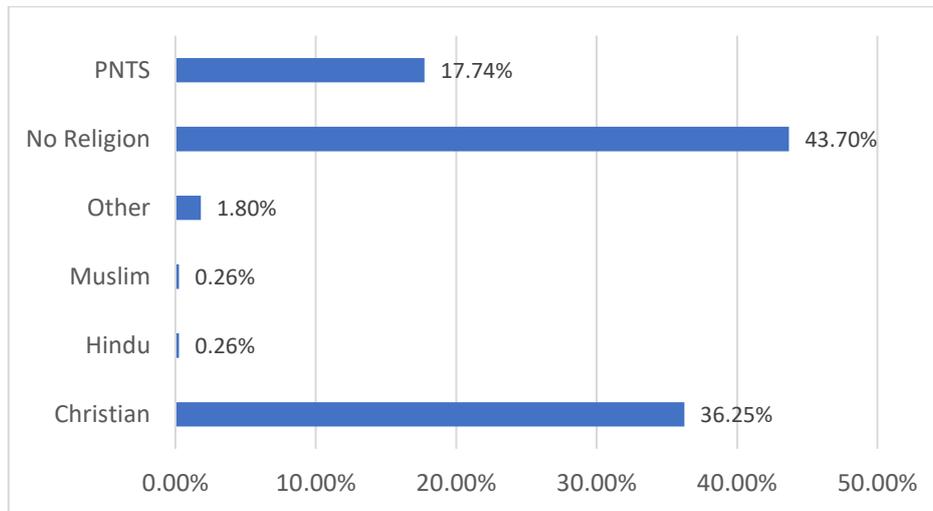
Ethnic origin	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
White British	75.00% (7.69%)	100.00% (0.00%)
White Scottish	25.00% (69.23%)	0.00% (0.00%)
White English	0.00% (11.54%)	0.00% (50.00%)
White Other	0.00% (3.85%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Prefer not to say	0.00% (7.69%)	0.00% (50.00%)

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 2020 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.

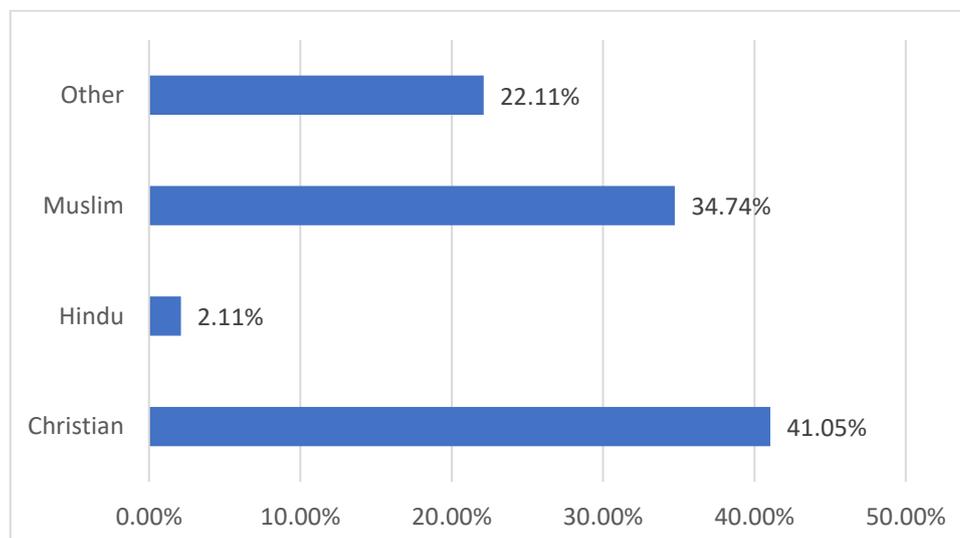
Religion and Belief

- The whole organisation as of 31 March 2021:**



Religion/belief	2021 report	2020 report	2019 report
Buddhist	0.00%	0.32%	0.31%
Christian	36.25%	35.71%	38.46%
Hindu	0.26%	0.48%	0.16%
Muslim	0.26%	0.48%	0.16%
Other	1.80%	1.11%	0.31%
No Religion	43.70%	42.86%	43.17%
Prefer not to say	17.74%	19.04%	17.43%

- The Royal Blind School as of 31 March 2021:**



Religion/belief	2021 report	2020 report	2019 report
Buddhist	0.00%	0.78%	0.71%
Christian	41.05%	44.19%	43.57%
Other religion	2.11%	0.78%	1.43%
No religion	34.74%	34.11%	37.86%
Prefer not to say	22.11%	20.16%	16.43%

In the following tables figures in brackets represent the 2019-20 statistics.

- **Recruitment:**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Religion/belief	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Christian	33.33% (29.03%)	33.33% (66.67%)
Hindu	0.00% (1.08%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Muslim	0.00% (2.15%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Other religion	4.17% (3.23%)	16.67% (0.00%)
No religion	33.33% (32.26%)	16.67% (0.00%)
Prefer not to say	29.17% (32.26%)	33.33% (33.33%)

Job applicants between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Religion/belief	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Buddhist	0.00% (0.13%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Christian	33.33% (34.27%)	33.33% (20.00%)
Hindu	0.00% (1.03%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Jewish	0.00% (0.13%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Muslim	0.00% (1.41%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Sikh	0.00% (0.13%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Other religion	4.17% (2.82%)	16.67% (0.00%)
No religion	33.33% (47.50%)	16.67% (60.00%)
Prefer not to say	29.17% (12.58%)	33.33% (20.00%)

- **Leavers** between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Religion/belief	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Buddhist	0.38% (0.84%)	2.86% (0.00%)

Christian	34.22% (42.02%)	48.57% (55.55%)
Hindu	0.76% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Muslim	0.76% (0.00%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Other religion	0.38% (2.52%)	0.00% (5.56%)
No religion	41.83% (30.25%)	31.43% (22.22%)
Prefer not to say	21.67% (24.37%)	17.14% (16.67%)

Employees promoted internally between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

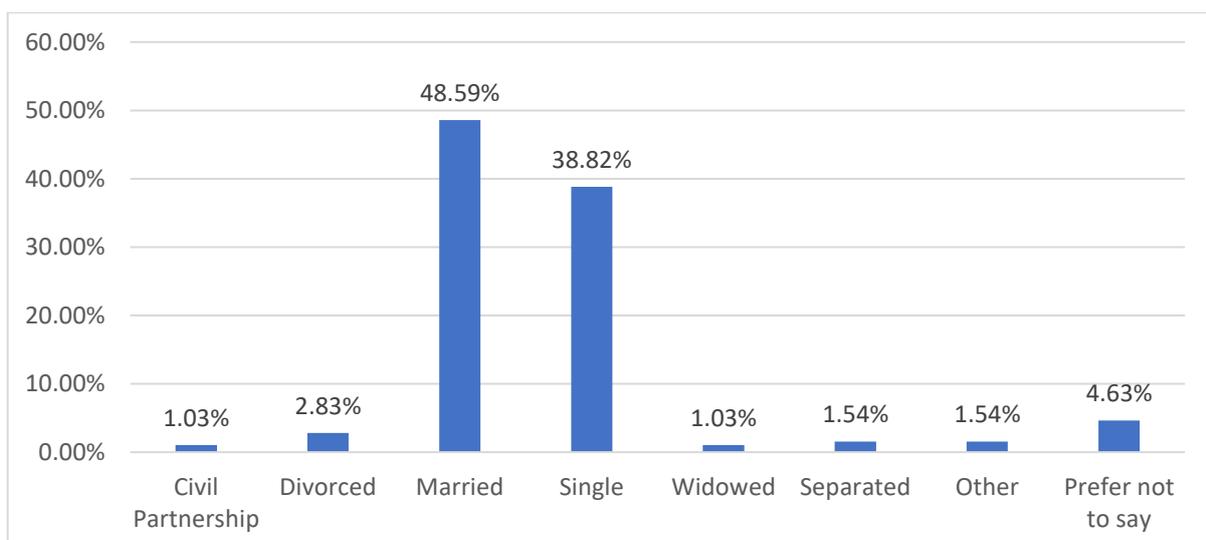
Religion/belief	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Christian	0.00% (26.92%)	0.00% (0.00%)
No religion	100.00% (50.00%)	100.00% (50.00%)
Prefer not to say	23.08% (23.8%)	0.00% (50.00%)

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 2020 report.

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

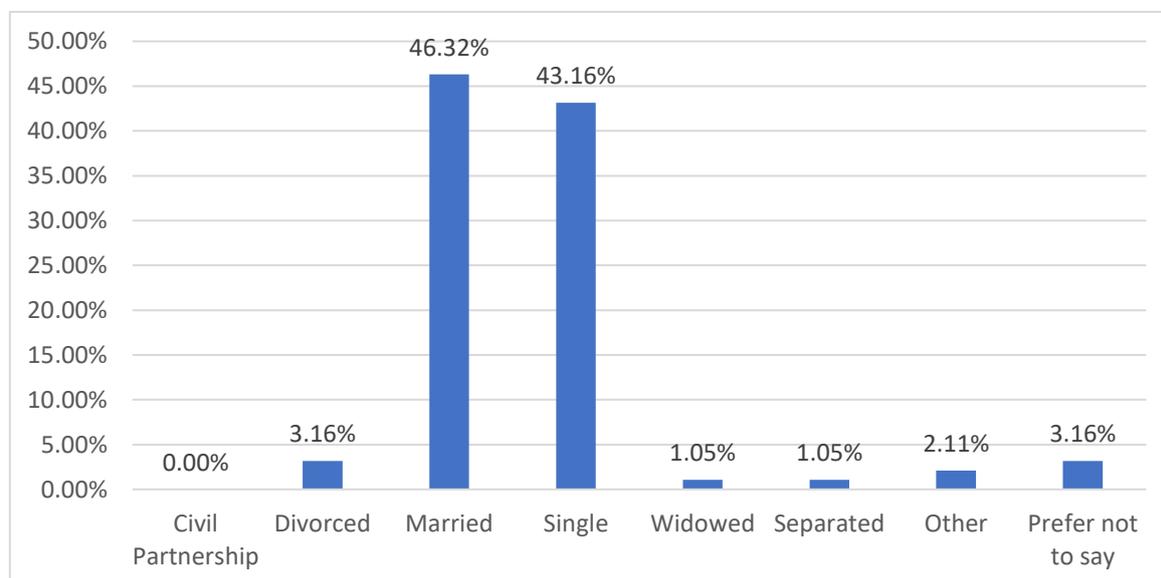
Marriage/Civil Partnership Status

• **The whole organisation as of 31 March 2021:**



Status	2021 report	2020 report	2019 report
Civil Partnership	1.03%	2.70%	2.20%
Divorced	2.83%	4.60%	4.40%
Married	48.56%	45.56%	46.78%
Single	38.82%	38.57%	40.82%
Widowed	1.03%	1.27%	1.10%
Separated	1.54%	1.27%	0.63%
Other	1.54%	-	-
Prefer not to say	4.63%	6.03%	4.08%

The Royal Blind School as of 31 March 2021:



Status	2021 report	2020 report	2019 report
Civil Partnership	0.00%	0.78%	0.71%
Divorced	3.16%	2.33%	2.14%
Married	46.32%	51.16%	52.14%
Single	43.16%	39.53%	38.57%
Widowed	1.05%	0.78%	0.71%
Separated	1.05%	0.78%	0.71%
Other	2.11%	-	-
Prefer not to say	3.16%	4.65%	5.00%

In the following tables figures in brackets represent the 2019-20 statistics.

- **Recruitment**

New employees appointed between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Marriage/civil partnership status	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Civil Partnership	0.00% (4.30%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Divorced	4.17% (5.38%)	16.67% (0.00%)
Married	50.00% (35.48%)	33.33% (66.67%)
Single	37.50% (33.33%)	33.33% (33.33%)
Widowed	0.00% (2.15%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Separated	0.00% (3.23%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Other	4.17% (-)	16.67% (-)
Prefer not to say	4.17% (16.13%)	0.00% (0.00%)

Job applicants between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Marriage/civil partnership status	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Civil Partnership	3.19% (4.75%)	10.64% (10.00%)
Divorced	3.35% (6.80%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Married	23.29% (35.17%)	23.40% (10.00%)
Single	59.49% (40.69%)	57.45% (70.0%)
Widowed	0.16% (0.64%)	2.13% (0.00%)
Separated	1.91% (2.95%)	2.13% (0.00%)
Prefer not to say	8.61% (8.99%)	4.26% (10.00%)

- **Leavers** between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Marriage/civil partnership status	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Civil Partnership	4.56% (2.52%)	2.86% (5.56%)
Divorced	6.84% (4.20%)	2.86% (0.00%)
Married	42.59% (41.18%)	60.00% (66.67%)

Single	36.88% (46.22%)	31.43% (27.78%)
Widowed	1.52% (0.84%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Separated	1.14% (0.84%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Other	0.76% (-)	2.86% (-)
Prefer not to say	5.70% (4.20%)	0.00% (0.00%)

- **Employees promoted internally** between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021:

Marriage/civil partnership status	The whole organisation	The Royal Blind School
Divorced	0.00% (3.85%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Married	25.00% (50.00%)	0.00% (50.00%)
Single	50.00% (42.31%)	0.00% (50.00%)
Widowed	25.00% (0.00%)	100.00% (0.00%)

A vast majority of our staff are either 'Married' or 'Single'. These proportions are similar to the figures presented in our 2020 report.

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.

Gender Pay Gap Information

Gender Pay Gap Information provided in this report relates to the Royal Blind School only. Gender pay gap information for the whole of Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans is published separately in line with The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

- **The Royal Blind School as of 31 March 2021**

The gender pay gap is the difference in average hourly earnings between men and women.

Gender pay gap information below is presented using two measures, mean and median. The mean average is calculated by adding all individual employees' hourly rate of pay and dividing by the total number of employees. The median average is calculated by listing all employees' hourly rate of pay and finding the midpoint.

Mean Gender Pay Gap: 2.3%

- Overall mean hourly rate: £16.54 per hour.
- Mean hourly rate of female employees: £16.50 per hour
- Mean hourly rate of male employees: £16.89 per hour

Median Gender Pay Gap: 0.0%

- Overall median hourly rate: £15.59 per hour
- Median hourly rate of female employees: £15.59 per hour
- Median hourly rate of male employees: £15.59 per hour

The table below shows a split across different staff categories of our female and male employees within the school. The figures in brackets show 2019 figures.

	Average hourly rate	Female employees	Male employees
Domestic/Kitchen Staff	£9.97	15.29% (13.49%)	0.00% (7.69%)
General Staff	£14.16	7.05% (8.73%)	20.00% (20.00%)
Learning Support Assistants	£13.57	12.94% (20.64%)	0.00% (0.00%)
Nurses	£15.89	5.88% (6.35%)	20.00% (13.33%)
Residential Care Staff	£15.59	37.65% (32.54%)	40.00% (26.67%)
Teachers	£23.79	16.47% (15.87%)	20.00% (20.00%)
Senior Management	£31.61	4.70% (3.17%)	0.00% (13.33%)

Although only 4.70% of all female school staff work in Senior Management roles, that group consists solely of female employees. Teachers are the next highest paid staff group within the school, with average pay at £23.79 (mean average) significantly above the average hourly rate for the school.

80% of all male employees in the school are employed in teaching, residential care or nursing roles.

Domestic/Kitchen Staff are the lowest paid group within the school, paid significantly below the average hourly rate. Over 15% of all school female employees are employed in these roles, there are no male staff employed within these roles.

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

Our figures compare favourably to the ONS statistics, which show a national gender pay gap for Scotland (2020) at 10.4% (mean) and 10.9% (median). We are

confident that our employees are paid fairly and equally for the same or similar roles.

We have a very low proportion of male employees within the school (10.5%, which corresponds to 10 employees). This means even small fluctuations can make a significant difference to our gender pay gap.

- **Equal Pay Statement**

We support and promote equality of opportunity for all staff and believe that they 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 pay scale 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 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 2017

Since we published our equality status report in April 2017, we have been continually working towards six 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 are determined that no-one should face sight loss alone. That is why at Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans our mission is to reach everyone in Scotland

with sight loss – where and when they need us. Our commitment to this, and to supporting people of all ages with sight loss in our own facilities and beyond is what drives us. This is our charitable purpose. It is why we exist, and something we live and breathe every day.

To help us in our ambition, we redefined our mission and changed our names - our new names represent and embrace a new period of change and growth, focusing us on the issue which matters most: tackling the impact of vision loss together.

Our former names served us well over the decades and formed two charities with proud histories. It had become clear, however, that our names were barriers to achieving our goals. We needed to address and overcome these barriers to ensure we are able to reach as many people as we can with sight loss across Scotland.

Specific details of how we currently 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. All our managers involved in recruitment and selection go through our in-house Recruitment Interview Skills training. We also deliver Dignity at Work training, and will soon be introducing "Equality, Diversity and Inclusion" e-learning for all staff. In 2020 we launched our new recruitment platform, which will help us be more accessible and reach a wider audience. We regularly monitor our advertising locations and recruitment practices to ensure we are fully inclusive.

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 Scotland.

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

We currently have 7 male and 5 female Board members, which means 58% of our Board are male and 42% are female. We also have 5 co-opted Committee Members, of whom 2 are female, 2 are male, and 1 is gender neutral.

Our recent governance review resulted in a reduction in the number of Board members, and we welcomed a number of new Board members over the past four years. All our Board vacancies were advertised externally, and we followed an open and transparent recruitment process for all positions. We carried out a skills gap analysis of our existing Board and developed a role description and person specification based on the gaps identified and with reference to the latest Guidance and Good Practice for Charity Trustees. We advertised in various places including

Goodmoves and Volunteer Scotland, as well as social media. We used structured interviews and candidates were assessed consistently throughout the process.

Board appointments are made on the basis of skills, experience and knowledge needed to complement the existing Board membership and ensure that the Board is well equipped to discharge its charitable duties. 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.

We commenced equal opportunities monitoring with our new Board Members as part of the recruitment process. We will look at the most appropriate ways of collating this information in respect of our existing Board members to help us assess where we stand in relation to other protected characteristics, including ethnicity.

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.

Since the introduction of our in-house Dignity at Work training, 465 employees took part in the training.

The course ensures that our staff are equipped to:

- apply the Dignity at Work Policy in their daily work
- define bullying, harassment and victimisation
- recognise and distinguish acceptable and unacceptable attitudes and behaviours in the workplace
- identify the 9 Protected Characteristics in relation to example situations of discrimination
- know how to raise, report and resolve an issue involving Dignity at Work in line with Sight Scotland's and Sight Scotland Veterans' informal and formal procedures
- recognise the dangers of stereotyping and unconscious bias
- be aware of the positive outcomes achieved by a work culture that is accepting of difference and diversity.

This course is now mandatory for all staff. We are now planning to introduce an additional "Equality, diversity and inclusion" e-learning which will be rolled out to all staff in 2021.

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.

We have maintained our Disability Confident Employer (level 2) accreditation.

Through this process we were able to evidence that we carry out all the relevant actions and activities for this accreditation level. These are grouped under two key themes as outlined below:

Theme 1: Getting the right people for your business

Core actions:

- Actively looking to attract and recruit disabled people
- Providing a fully inclusive and accessible recruitment process
- Offering an interview to disabled people who meet the minimum criteria for the job
- Flexibility when assessing people so disabled job applicants have the best opportunity to demonstrate that they can do the job
- Proactively offering and making reasonable adjustments as required
- Encouraging our suppliers and partner firms to be Disability Confident
- Ensuring employees have appropriate disability equality awareness

Theme 2: Keeping and developing your people

Core actions:

- Promoting a culture of being Disability Confident
- Supporting employees to manage their disabilities or health conditions
- Ensuring there are no barriers to the development and progression of disabled staff
- Ensuring managers are aware of how they can support staff who are sick or absent from work
- Valuing and listening to feedback from disabled staff
- Reviewing the Disability Confident Employer self-assessment regularly

We have put processes in place to ensure that our Disability Confident commitments are met on an ongoing basis and that they are embedded on our normal processes and day-to-day operations.

Our Diversity and Inclusion Forum considered whether we should try to move to accreditation at level 3 but assessed that at this point in time we were ready for it. The Forum felt that there were a number of initiatives the organisation would like to undertake before taking that route – the progress towards these will depend on the resources available, our work around this has been delayed during the pandemic. The Forum is planning to revisit this in the future.

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.

We currently employ 9 staff (2.3%) with declared visual impairment compared to 2.2% in 2019. We are continuously reviewing our recruitment and selection processes to ensure they are fully accessible and inclusive. We recently launched our new recruitment platform, which will help us be more accessible and reach a wider audience.

Our internal VI (Vision Impairment) Advisory Group, which comprises of staff with professional VI expertise as well as staff who experienced sight loss, help us improve how we attract, support, develop and retain employees and volunteers with visual impairment. This may be at recruitment planning stage (e.g. to ensure our application process is accessible), or at any point during employment/volunteering (e.g. to ensure materials we produce are accessible).

Equality Outcomes for the period 2021 - 2025

We are committed to continuously improving our performance in attaining equality in our service provision and 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.

We are accredited as an Investor in People, and we gained our re-accreditation in 2021. 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.”

We operate a Diversity and Inclusion Forum with representatives from various minority backgrounds, from the different services we operate. 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 service provision and employment practice. We had to pause our Forum meetings during the pandemic, we will re-establish these in 2021 to support ongoing monitoring of our progress towards meeting our new Equality Outcomes:

1. We will reach more people with sight loss in Scotland, where and when they need us, to ensure they are fully included and can lead a fulfilling life.
2. We will influence positive change in government policy areas where visually impaired people experience inequality and promote greater awareness of visual impairment in public services and wider Scottish society.
3. We will ensure that all our services are fully inclusive and reach people from diverse backgrounds.
4. Within the Royal Blind School, we will ensure that inclusion and equality lead to improved outcomes for all learners, that all learners are included, engaged and involved in the life of the school and that all pupils feel very well supported to do their best.

5. In Sight Scotland Veterans, we will remove barriers and be more accessible by updating our eligibility criteria to allow us to support all veterans in Scotland who are experiencing sight loss, not just those with significant sight loss.
6. We will work to ensure that our employees reflect the diversity of the communities we support.
7. We will collate and analyse diversity and inclusion data relating to our volunteers, and work to ensure that our volunteers reflect the diversity of the local community.
8. We will ensure all staff and volunteers complete our upcoming "Equality, diversity and inclusion" e-learning annually. This is in addition to and will form a pre-requisite for our more in-depth Dignity at Work training (also mandatory for all staff) and our Recruitment and Interview Skills training for line managers.

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 diversity and inclusion forum.

The next full Equality Status Report will be published in April 2023. The report will include the following elements:

- Mainstreaming the equality duty
- Employee information
- Gender pay gap information
- Progress towards achieving our equality outcomes and a new set of outcomes.