

BELONGING ANNUAL REPORT ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/24

Cengiz Ali
June 2025

The Royal Academy of Music moves music forward by inspiring successive generations of musicians to connect, collaborate and create.
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**UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON**

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INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the Academy's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the Belonging Committee creates an annual report to be presented to the Governing Body and published on the Academy's website.

The report provides an update on activities and developments towards the Academy's equality aims and objectives; and presents relevant student and staff data sets accompanied by explanatory narrative. We have a legal duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty that sits within the Act.

The Academy continues to make progress towards leaving behind our legacy as an institution where only a particular demographic of people have access to higher education level musical training. Our student and staff populations are gradually changing, developing, and diversifying. We aim to maintain this momentum as we fully acknowledge that there is so much more to be done. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is everyone's responsibility, however specific teams, and groups (such as the Belonging Committee) provide leadership and oversight of our progress.

We are mindful of the evolving language of diversity and ensure that this features regularly in the business of the Belonging Committee. As a reminder the Academy no longer uses the terms BAME or BME. There are some instances where this may appear as data or information has been drawn from other external sources (UCAS and HESA). We identify where this is the case. Additionally, data from UCAS continues to categorise gender as male or female. When students enrol, we give them options to self-identify (and supply their preferred pronouns) in line with HESA categories.

I am pleased to be taking over as Chair of the Belonging Committee and would like to thank Catherine Jury our outgoing Chair for her excellent work in Chairing this group over the past 5 years. I am also pleased to announce Isobel Shankland as our new Deputy Chair and a special thanks to all Belonging Group members for their commitment and continued support.

Cengiz Ali
Director of Human Resources
Chair, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Committee 2023/24

ACTIVITIES AND UPDATES SINCE THE LAST REPORT

There were a significant number of developments, initiatives and activities contributing to the ongoing work in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging at the Academy in 2023/24. These are summarised below.

1.1 STUDENTS' UNION ACTIVITIES

Throughout the 2023–24 academic year, the Students' Union under their new president, Tiffany Qiu, has focused on strengthening community, improving access to support services, and addressing the real pressures affecting students' sense of belonging.

A major priority this year was student wellbeing. Working closely with Harpal Chatwal, Interim Head of Psychological Services, we introduced Drop-In Counselling Sessions and later launched 'Drop-In Tuesdays' from the SU Office to improve visibility and access to mental health support. Chester, our therapy dog, continued his popular visits across campus, even dropping into classrooms during exam season to ease stress.

The SU launched a new Disability Focus Group led by our Belonging Representative, Megan Humphries, providing disabled students with a platform to share feedback. This identified key areas for improvement, including a need for autism-specific counselling training, more support navigating online systems, and faster implementation of Personal Learning Plans (PLPs). We worked closely with staff across departments to address these issues. Our approach was shaped by lessons learned throughout the year: while we continue to advocate for students, we also recognised the importance of hearing both student and staff perspectives, improving communication and understanding across the Academy.

Social and belonging-building events remained central to our work. We celebrated LGBTQ+ History Month and International Women's Day with quizzes, karaoke, and socials, supported the Seen and Heard Festival for disabled students' voices, and organised Pride Week activities. Professional development opportunities like free student photoshoots and discounted tailoring services ahead of exams were also introduced to ease financial and practical burdens.

Financial hardship was a growing theme. Our Cost-of-Living Survey showed that 80% of students now work during term time, with many reporting impacts on both academic performance and mental health. Despite nationwide challenges, the combination of heavy conservatoire workloads and financial stress is particularly acute at the Academy. This year, the SU has built stronger connections across the Academy, improved the organisation of our activities, and worked hard to make every student feel heard and supported.

1.2 STAFF ACTIVITIES

The Staff Social Group continues to put on an array of inclusive activities which include termly coffee mornings, a wine and culture events, group concert attendance, and the staff quiz. The budget was increased to acknowledge and support the need to focus on staff wellbeing and the Academy's inaugural Wellbeing week was held last year which encouraged staff to focus on their mental and physical wellbeing. Events included staff massages, Yoga, Tai Chi, Alexander Technique and Feldenkrais classes and nature walks.

The Staff Social Group is publicised to new starters during the Induction afternoon and colleagues are encouraged to contact the group with any ideas for new events or activities that they would like to be part of or would like help to organise.

1.3 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION UPDATES

IN/EXCLUSION

Dean of Students Liz Kenny continues to publish a biannual newsletter to students and staff, outlining progress within the Academy's evolving Belonging culture. These updates generally highlight news, events, curriculum developments, and student led initiatives.

CURRICULUM

Our curriculum continues to evolve, bringing a wide range of composers, repertoire, and perspectives to taught materials, from early music to the present day and from outside the mainstream canon.

Since 2020, all pieces used in Aural Written Tests have been written by women, or by composers of colour. Several lecturers have taught entire years of Analytical Skills 2 with the music of female composers and works by female composers and student composers have been used in a number of electives.

Diversity is seen across all aspects of student repertoire choice for Principal Study solo recital assessments and has never been as diverse – with the vast majority of imaginative programmes being driven by student curiosity.

STUDENT FESTIVALS

The *Students Create* festival ran for a third time and was a huge success. They both put students' ideas, priorities and creativity at the centre of programming in ways that are reflected in and supported by our year-round Events programme. There is a continued increase in engagement from the general public, staff, and students. In 2024, 150 students presented 19 original creative projects to a total of over 1665 audience members in three days.

OPEN ACADEMY

Through the course of this academic year, Open Academy has offered students the opportunity to work with a wide range of people, including children and young people from a wide range of backgrounds through our work with schools in Camden. Netley Primary school, just 15 mins walk

from the Academy, is typical of the schools we partner with in reporting around 30 different languages being spoken by its students and staff. The school also reports that 56.6% of students are eligible for pupil premium, indicating that over half of the school population are living with deprivation.

The work also includes creative projects with children and young people attending pupil referral units, centres for those with special educational needs, and hospital schools. Other communities include adults with learning disabilities and those experiencing homelessness (through a partnership with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and The Connection.) A partnership with City of London Sinfonia includes creative work with young people who are in residential psychiatric care.

Julian West, Head of Open Academy, is leading a three-year residency in a local care home for people living with dementia, exploring the possibilities of improvisation using music and dance to support wellbeing, agency, and social citizenship.

MUSEUM AND COLLECTIONS

The Museum and Collections Department, which includes Museum, Library and Archive collections maintains the Exhibitions Working Group, which meets once per term, with representatives from several Academy's departments, Museum and Collections, Estates, Artistic Planning, Communications, Student Union, Musical Theatre, Undergraduate Programmes, Graduate Programmes and Open Academy. This group meets once per terms to discuss potential exhibitions and museum events calendar. During the 2023/24 academic year, thanks to the collaboration and the voices of staff and students, the team created content for 12 online objects of the month and seven small displays in the Tertis showcase. Over the past 12 months the calendar of exhibits and events acknowledged and celebrated Black History Month, with a display and a museum event curated by Academy students; Blind Awareness Month, which included the 'Three General Musicianship Papers for the Licentiate Examination of the Royal Academy of Music: September, 1929 – Easter, 1930' which is written entirely in braille. We celebrated women with a display and object of the month which was the certificate awarding Fellowship of the Royal Academy of Music (FRAM) to Marjorie Hayward in 15th June 1922 and held a gallery event 'Demystifying the Diva' led by an Academy PhD student. The Library also introduced a Quiet Space for students and continues to diversify the authors represented by utilising student/staff led acquisitions, and seeking new works by female composers and composers of colour.

1.4 WIDENING PARTICIPATION

Our Widening Participation department continues to engage with around 500 young people in Clubs and activities from ages 4 and 5 through to pre-application mentoring for teenagers. By using the programme title 'Your Academy,' Widening Participation welcomes every young person into the Academy community, encouraging them to return for further skill development. Belonging to the Academy community from the very first interaction means that, with the right dedication and support, they have the chance to progress through our various programmes.

Young people progress from Your Academy to a variety of destinations for further study, including:

19 applications to Junior Jazz, 17 auditions, three offered places
14 applied to Junior Academy, 11 were offered live auditions and seven offered places.

Others went on to undergraduate courses at the Guildhall School of Music, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, Royal Holloway, Leeds University and Goldsmiths.

With Community First String Experience, from the 90 in the final year 16 were chosen for a Pathways Project (to enhance their skills) and a subsequent eight successfully auditioned for the Bridge Project which will lead to FSE4 in Sept 2025.

1.5 POSTGRADUATE PERIODIC REVIEW

Our programmes of study undergo a formal review process every five years. Following the 2023 PG review, which explored belonging themes with stakeholders in the review event and in a series of meetings in preparation, we have continued a policy that there should not be formal institutional assessment 'requirements' in this area, because the kinds of requirements that might be considered would potentially need to be very different across the wide-ranging cohort. Students and staff continue to be strongly supportive of the principle that 'ownership' needs to rest with individuals, and that the institution's role is to provide support and guidance.

Belonging themes are actively rolled into postgraduate portfolio supervision, which covers all aspects of student Academy experience, and are given an explicit public platform in the Students' Create Festival. PG electives continue to explore belonging themes in ways that connect directly to individual student work.

1.6 GENDER PAY GAP 2023/24

The UK has a legal requirement to report on the gender pay gap.

The Academy's gender pay gap 2023/24 analysis report (published April 2024) reported a mean gender pay gap of 12%, a decrease of 4% from the previous year and a median gender pay gap of 11%, down from 14% in the previous year.

The Academy remains committed to ensuring that men and women are paid equally for work rated as equivalent within the job evaluation scheme and for work of equal value. We will continue our work in this area to reduce the gap. The Academy's overall results are in line within the UK HEI sector for the same period also showing a mean gender pay gap of 12% and a median of 11%. The challenge for the Academy is to further reduce the gap across teaching roles.

The figures can be attributed to continued work in the following areas:

- Transparency of salary information in job advertising
- The introduction of hourly rates
- A robust job evaluation scheme
- Name blind recruitment
- A commitment to embracing flexible working across the institution
- A commitment to promoting family-friendly policies and a work-life balance
- Close monitoring of equality data and oversight at Governing Body level

1.7 TRAINING AND AWARENESS

Students

The completion of three training modules became a requirement of full enrolment for students from September 2022, this continues to be a requirement. In 2024 as part of the Academy's ESG commitment Climate Change training was also added.

All students completed modules on Bystander Intervention, Consent on Campus and Unconscious Bias.

Staff

As part of the Academy's continued commitment to safeguarding and staff development, staff are enrolled onto a range of specific short courses, some mandatory, according to their Academy role. The platform also contains a range of other short modules that staff can complete according to areas of interest.

The mandatory courses:

Teaching staff

1. Student Disclosures of Unwanted Sexual Incidents
2. Safeguarding
3. Diversity in Learning and Teaching
4. Sexual Harassment
5. Bullying & Harassment
6. Race in the Workplace
7. Information Security Smart
8. Data Protection
9. Unconscious Bias

Part-time hourly paid teachers can claim up to 3 hours at the standard part-time hourly rate for the mandatory training courses.

Professional Services staff

1. Safeguarding
2. Diversity in Learning and Teaching
3. Race in the Workplace
4. Sexual Harassment
5. Bullying & Harassment
6. Information Security Smart
7. Data Protection
8. Unconscious Bias

1.8 WORKING WITH BLUEPRINT FOR ALL

In 2020 we invited Blueprint for All to undertake a thorough review of Belonging at the Academy. After conducting in-depth interviews with staff and students, and an audit of all our policies and procedures, they recognised our commitment to change. They identified areas for improvement, and they have supported us in working towards our goals.

In 2024 they returned and noted a marked sense of progress and optimism as well as achievement, within our community. Read their new report [here](#).

MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE EQUALITY ACT

As an organisation in receipt of public funding, the Academy is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty, which consists of specific requirements designed to ensure that we are compliant with the Equality Act and to demonstrate the public sector's commitment to equality and diversity.

As well as the general public sector duty, which requires due regard to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation,
- promote equality of opportunity for under-represented groups, and
- foster good relations between members of different groups,

The Academy is subject to specific duties relating to higher education. These duties require the Academy to:

- have specific and measurable equality objectives,
- demonstrate 'due regard' in implementing policies, procedures, and new practices, and
- regularly publish information on the diversity of the organisation.

The Academy met the first of these requirements by publishing the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2020-24 and accompanying Action Plan, which established objectives against each of the protected characteristics for delivery through to 2023.

The Academy demonstrates due regard in respect of new policies, procedures, and practices through its established framework of conducting Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), to ensure that changes to policies and new initiatives are assessed for their impact (whether positive or negative) on groups with protected characteristics. Examples of EIAs conducted in the 2023/24 academic year are:

- updated Continuous Feedback Policy
- updated GIA Policy

Continue with fulfilling the Educational Strategy 2022-2027, the third requirement is fulfilled via publication of this annual Belonging report containing student and staff monitoring data.

APPLICANT, STUDENT AND STAFF EQUALITY DATASETS AND COMMENTARY

The following sections contain equality monitoring data and commentary for students, applicants, and staff. The data for applicants is drawn from UCAS data (therefore using the reference BAME – see statement in the Introduction of this report), which is released at the end of each calendar year. The latest data set for applicants is for **2024/25 entry**. Student and staff data is drawn from HEIDI Plus and created from HESA datasets and released the following February. The latest data set for current students is for the **2023/24 academic year**.

The data on staff recruitment is taken from internal data sources as part of the recruitment process.

APPLICANT EQUALITY DATA AND INFORMATION

Although the data in this section falls under the remit of access and participation at the Academy, it is useful to capture it in this report alongside the enrolled student data. The data on gender, in Table 1, is broadly equal, indicative of the wider sector and the music subject area. It is in line with the patterns that can be observed in the enrolled student data in section 5.4. The data in this section is drawn from UCAS.

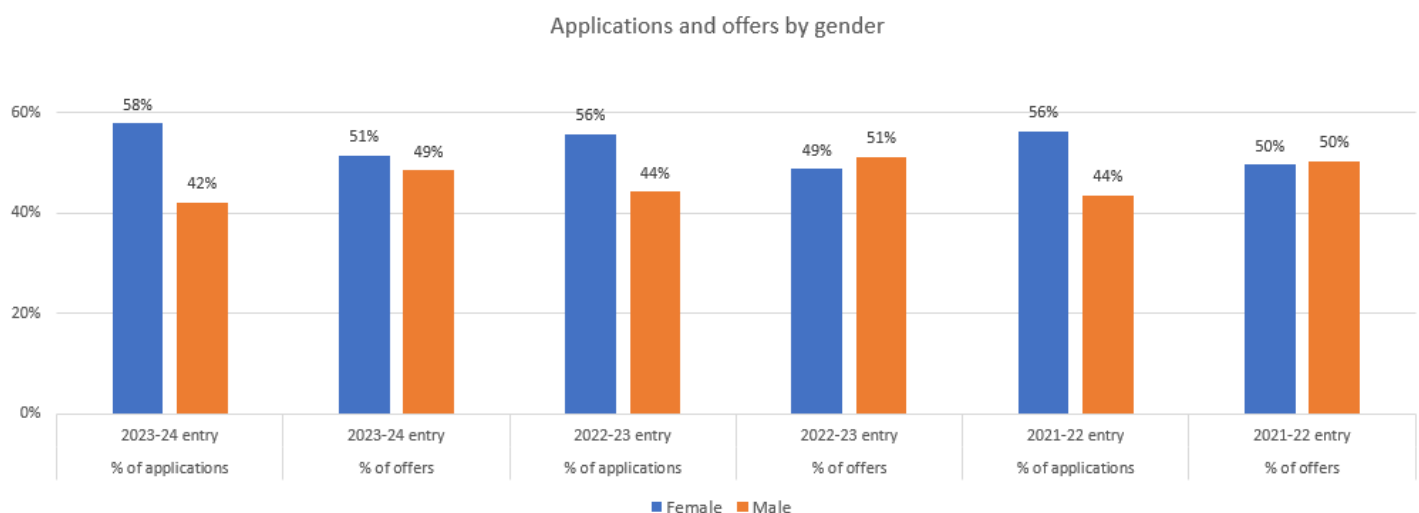


TABLE 1

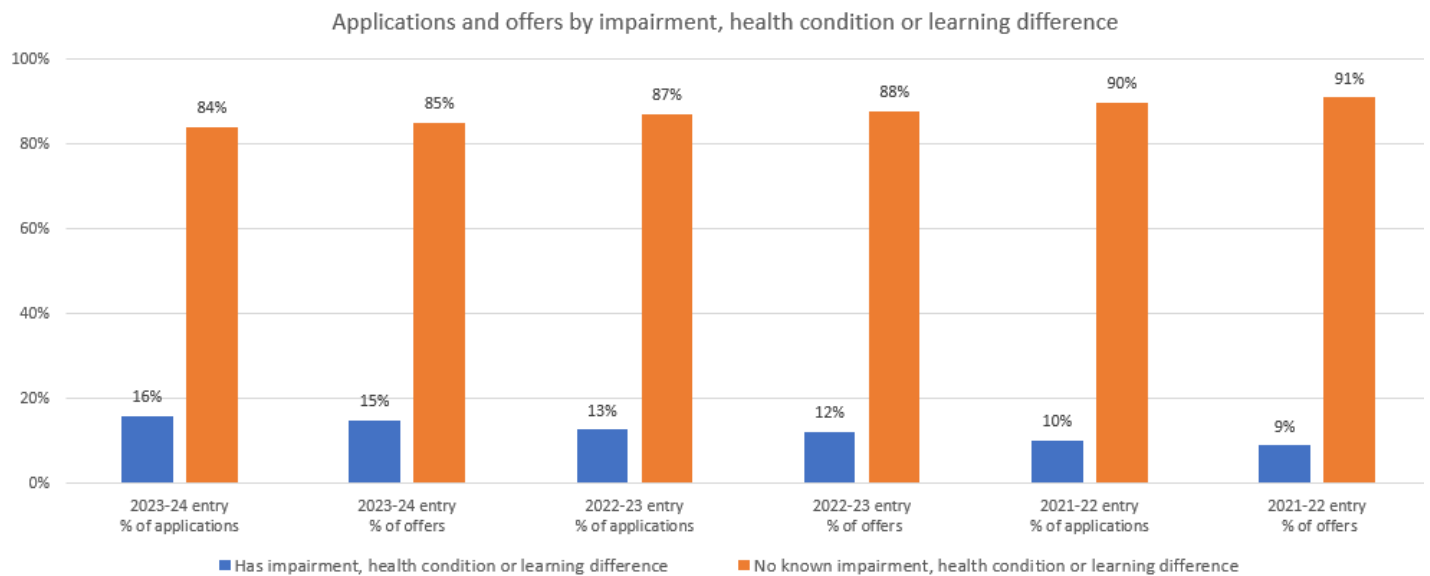


TABLE 1



TABLE 2

The tables in this section demonstrate that we are still seeing fluctuations in progress in applicants from and offers made to more diverse groups of people, while we are seeing a small linear increase in applicants from and offers made to people with an impairment, health condition or learning difference. There is more work for us to do towards our targets, and the long-term challenge remains for the Academy to contribute as far as possible to an increase in the pool of applicants from under-represented groups. This is being addressed via the targets and activities set out in our Access and Participation Plan and developments, initiatives and activities outlined in the Activities and Updates Since the Last Report 1.1 through 1.6.

STUDENT EQUALITY DATA AND INFORMATION

1.9 AGE

Undergraduate students can be divided into two categories according to HESA definitions: young (under 21), or mature (over 21) according to their age at their start date.

The most common age to start an undergraduate programme at the Academy is 18. For safeguarding good practice reasons, our Admissions Policy states that normally, students who join us in September of each year must be over 18 in order to have the opportunity and ability to fully participate in all areas of student and conservatoire life.

In line with sector norms, the majority of Academy students are aged 24 or below and the Academy's overall student age profile remains stable and aligns with the conservatoire sector (Figures 1 and 2). The postgraduate age data (Figure 4) shows that the majority are at the younger end of the scale, with 67% in the 21-24 years bracket. This remains unchanged from the previous year.

RAM age profile 2023-24: all levels

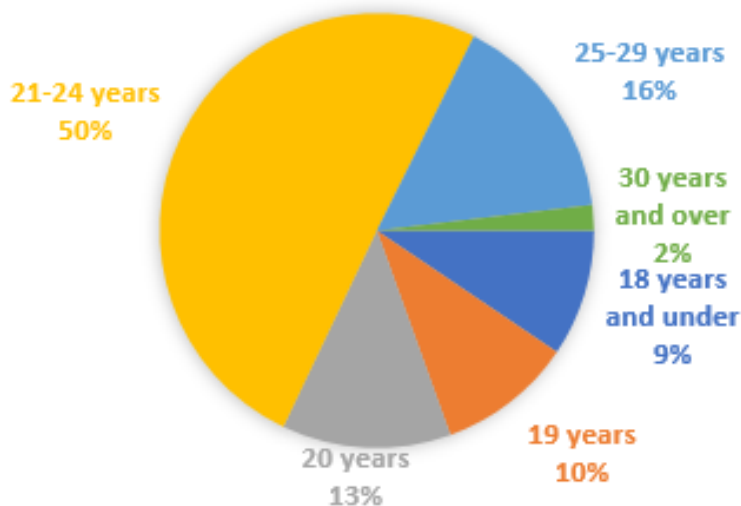


FIGURE 1

UK conservatoires age 2023-24: all levels

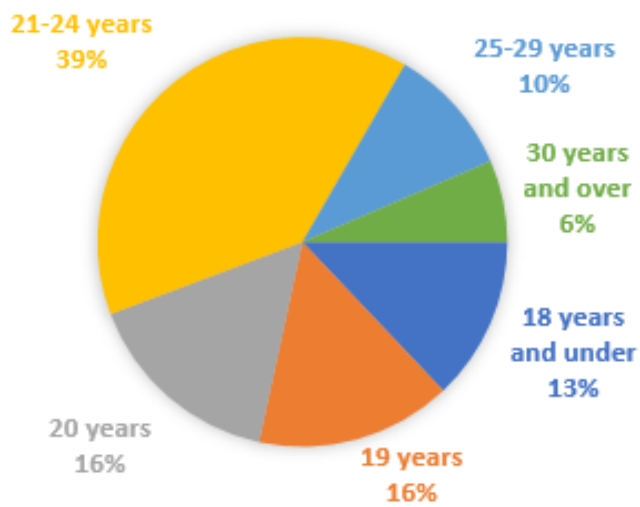


FIGURE 2

RAM age profile 2023-24: undergraduates

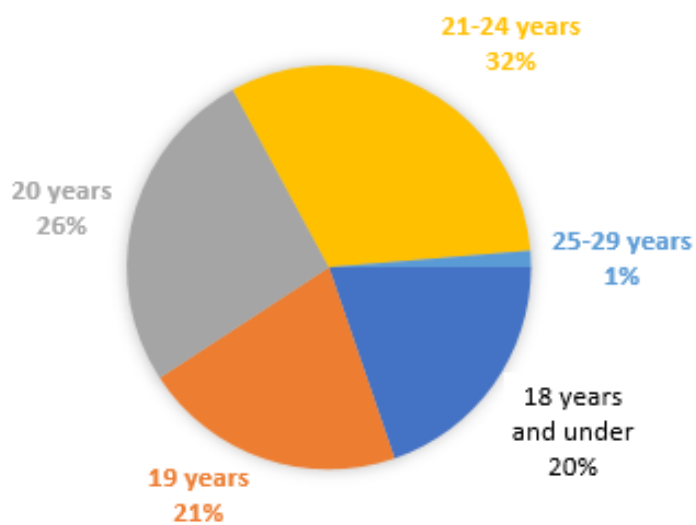


FIGURE 3

RAM age profile 2023-24: postgraduates

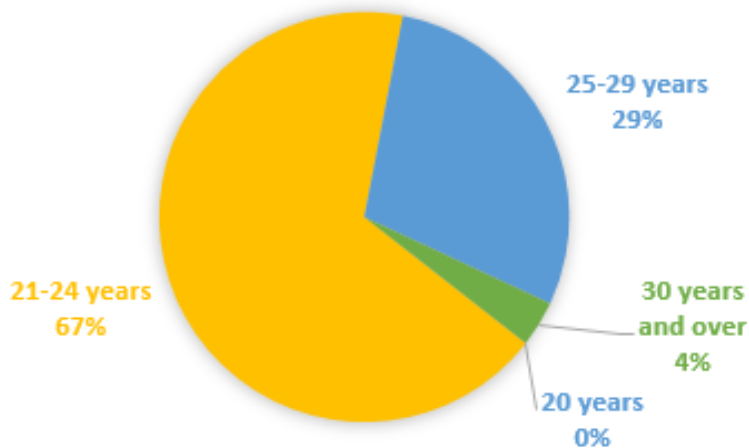


FIGURE 4

1.10 DISABILITY

In 2023/24, HESA data shows 16% (17% in the previous year) of all students declared a disability (Figure 5). This is made up of 19% (19% in the previous year) in the undergraduate population and 14% (15% in the previous year) in the postgraduate population. This is below the conservatoire sector average of 26%, which has risen quite significantly in recent years compared with the Academy (Figure 9).

The majority of disability declarations at the Academy are those under the learning-related category. The Academy provides Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) to support students through their studies, and with assessments through the provision of a specific plan arranged in partnership with the Disability Advisor.

RAM student impairments, health conditions and learning differences 2023-24 all



FIGURE 5

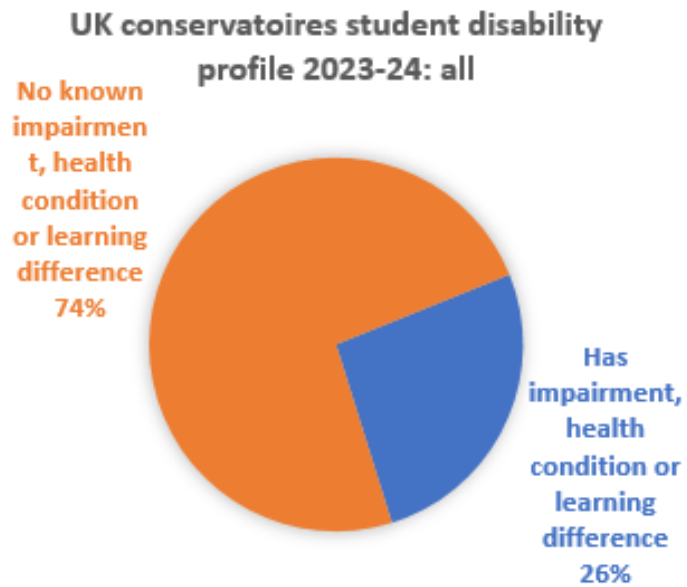


FIGURE 6

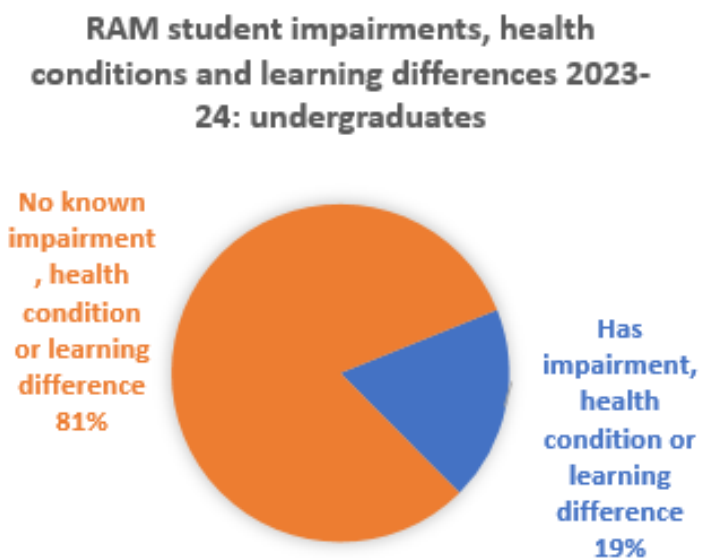


FIGURE 7

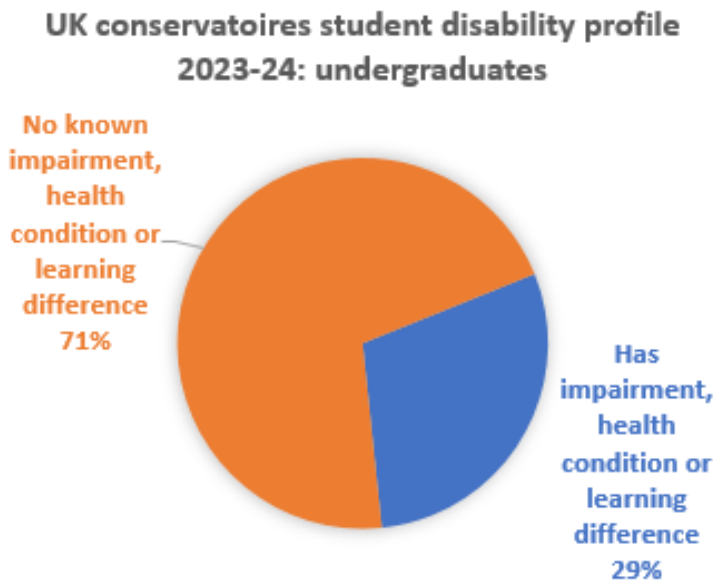


FIGURE 8

DISABILITY COMPARISON OVER THREE YEARS

Status	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Known to have a disability	14.6%	17.0%	16%
No known disability/unknown	85.4%	83.0%	84%

FIGURE 9

1.11 ETHNICITY

In 2023/24, the Academy's population from other ethnically diverse groups was 17%, (Figure 10) which remains the same as the previous year, compared to the conservatoire average which is 13% (Figure 11). The three-year comparison (Figure 14) shows that things are continuing to move in the right direction from previous years. The undergraduate population from ethnically diverse groups was 17%, a rise of 2% from the previous year, which is encouraging for our access and participation targets. The percentage of unknown/not available data has also been reduced over the last three cycles.

RAM student ethnic diversity 2023-24: all

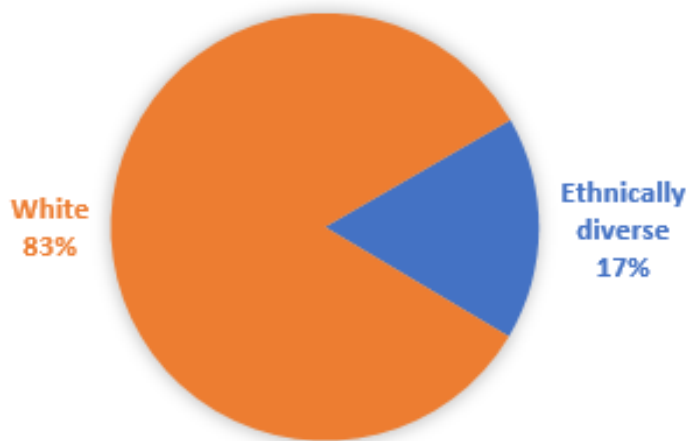


FIGURE 10

UK conservatoires student ethnic diversity 2023-24: all

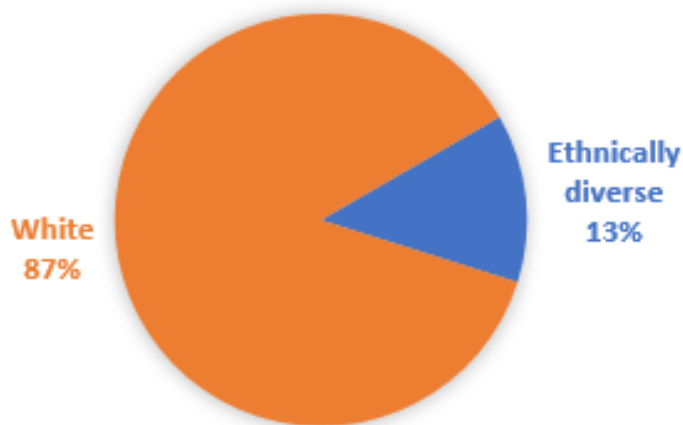


FIGURE 11

RAM student ethnic diversity 2023-24:
undergraduates

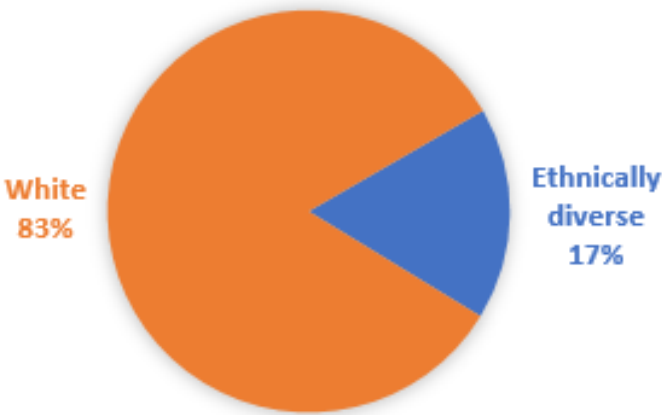


FIGURE 12

RAM student ethnic diversity 2023-24:
postgraduates

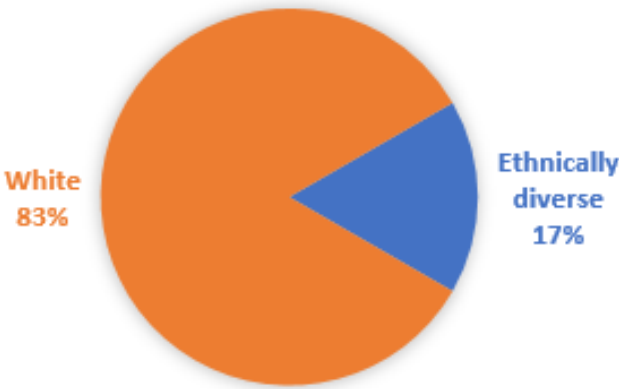


FIGURE 13

ETHNICITY COMPARISON OVER THREE YEARS: HESA IDENTIFIERS

Status	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Asian	3.8%	3.8%	5.3%
Black	1.3%	2.6%	1.3%
Mixed	7.6%	7.7%	9.2%
Other	0.0%	1.3%	0%
White	87.3%	84.6%	84.2

FIGURE 14

1.12 GENDER

In 2023/24, the student population remained at a fairly an even split of 51:49 female to male students, as did the conservatoire wide population at 48:52 female to male. Despite anticipating in the previous year's report that HESA would begin classifying gender more widely, this has not yet been demonstrated through data releases.

RAM student gender profile 2023-24: all



FIGURE 15

**UK conservatoires gender profile 2023-24:
all**



FIGURE 16

1.13 STUDENT ATTAINMENT DATA

The following charts set out the percentage of students achieving 'good degrees' (first- or second-class honours) according to disability, ethnicity, and gender. The data below supports our narrative that once students have been admitted to the Academy, there are minimal attainment gaps between students from under-represented groups and the rest of the student population.

Degree classifications by gender

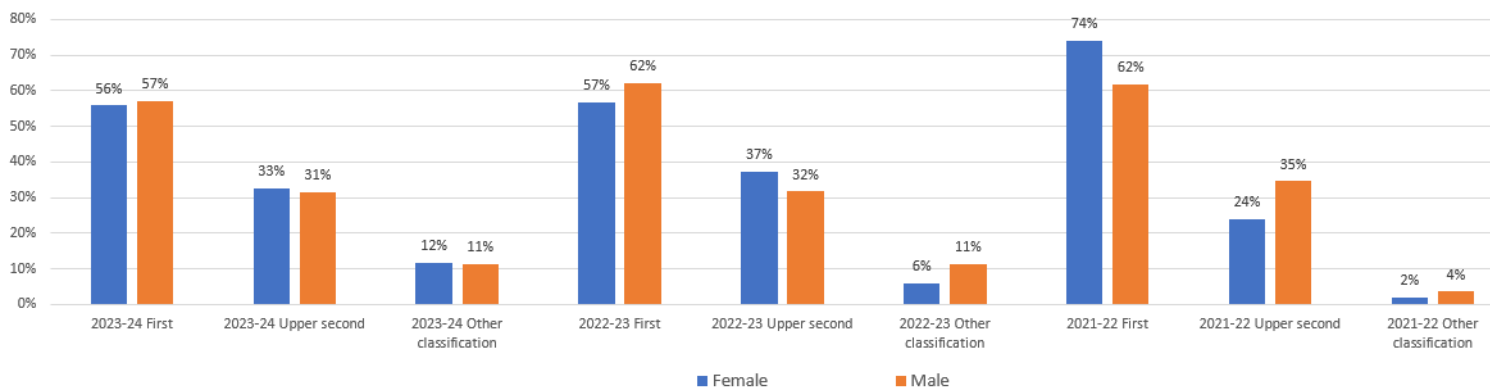


FIGURE 17

Degree classifications by impairment, health condition or learning difference

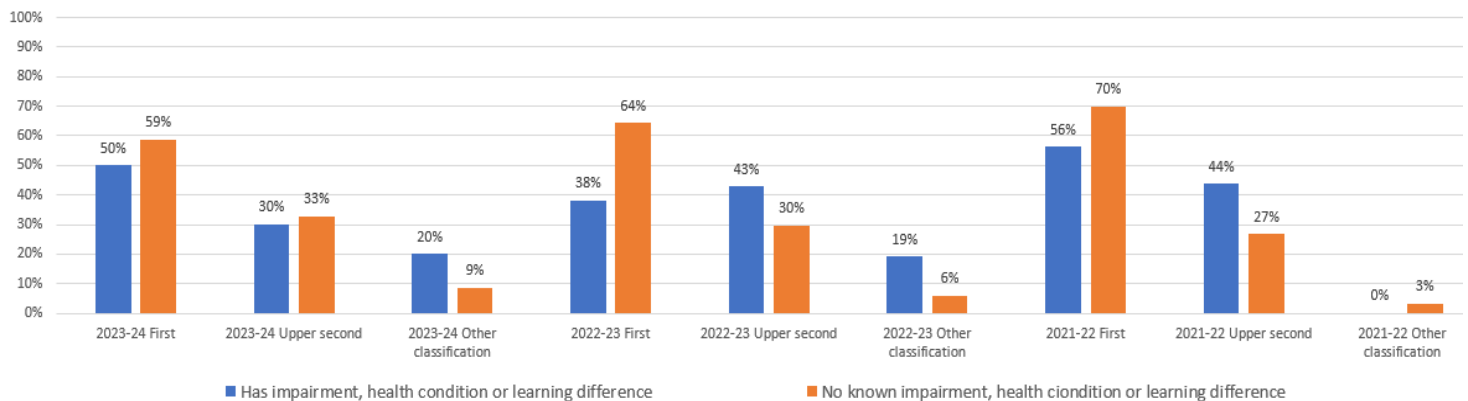


FIGURE 18

Degree classifications by ethnic diversity

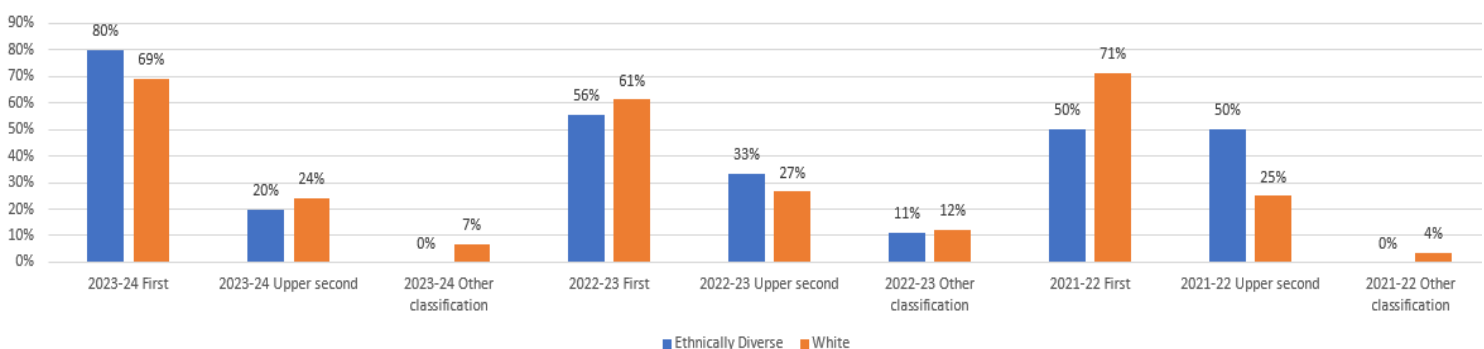


FIGURE 19

STAFF EQUALITY DATA AND INFORMATION

The following information provides an overall diversity profile of our staff and includes recruitment monitoring data in each case. This data informs the setting of our equality objectives as part of our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan.

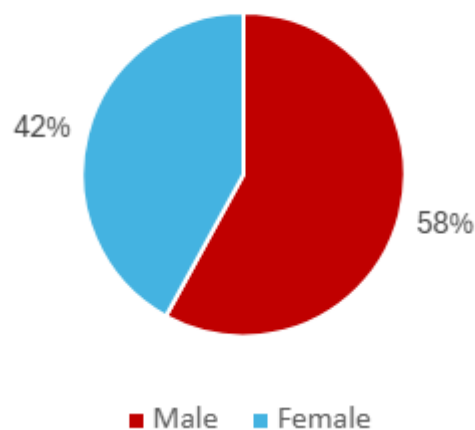
We began collecting data for sexual orientation and religion or belief in 2010 and hold data for over 75% of staff.

In line with the Equality Act 2010, the below data is broken according to Age, Ethnicity, Gender, Disability, Religion or Belief and Sexual Orientation. The following data shows the breakdown of a 2023/24 total of 568 staff, as a percentage.

1.14 GENDER

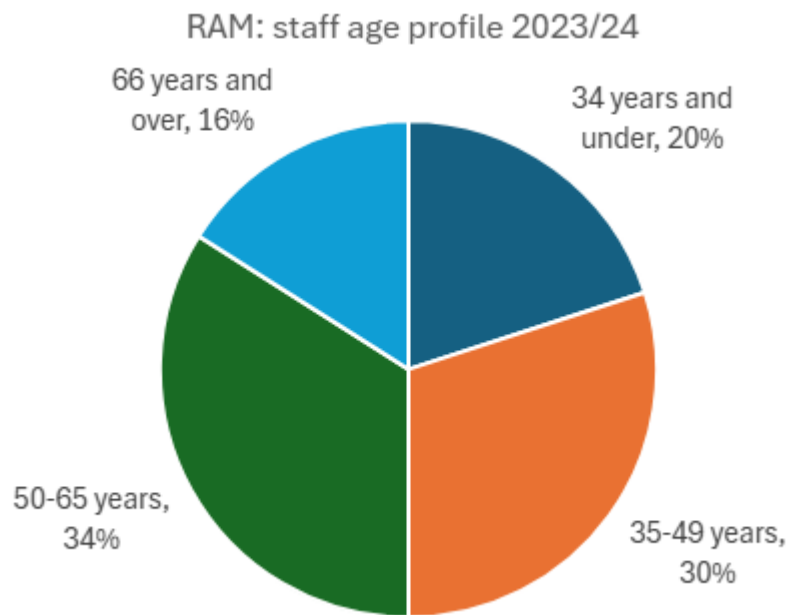
The overall Academy gender profile has remained relatively unchanged over the past seven years. A comparatively low turnover of professorial (teaching) staff has led to a slower than anticipated increase in the number of female staff across the institution; however, female staff are strongly represented in managerial, Head of Department and Senior Management roles.

RAM: gender profile 2023/24



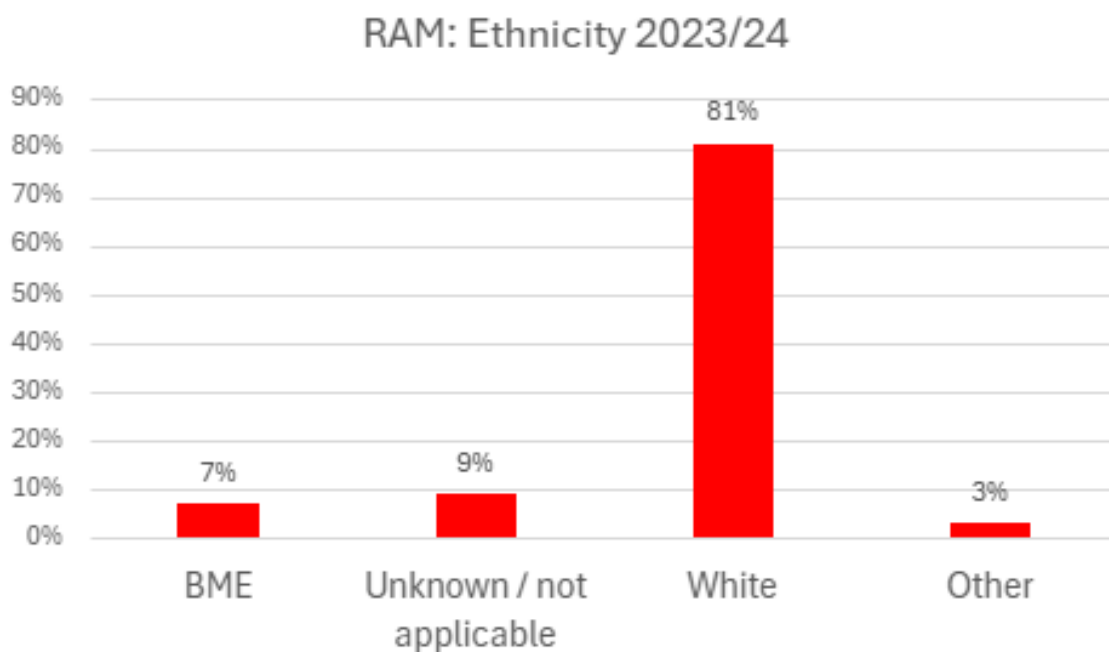
1.15 AGE

The Academy continues to be an age-diverse employer of the conservatoire sector in the 50-65 years and 66 years and over categories. There has been little change since 2016/17.



1.16 ETHNICITY

While the number of colleagues from other ethnic groups had remained consistent (and low) for many years, there has been a 1% increase since 2022/23. There is however still a long way to go in improving these figures and the DEIB Committee will focus on this during the 2024/25 cycle.



1.17 DISABILITY

Disability breakdown	
Declared disabled	6%
Not known to be disabled	94%
Total	100%

1.18 SEXUALITY

Breakdown of staff sexuality profile	
Heterosexual/straight	55.5%
Gay/lesbian	6%
Bisexual	3.5%
Prefer not to say	27%
Other	0.5%
Unknown (data unavailable)	7.5%

1.19 RELIGION OR BELIEF

Breakdown of staff religion or belief	
Christian	24%
Other (including Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh)	4%
No religion	35%
Spiritual	1%
Prefer not to say	28%
Unknown (data unavailable)	8

1.20 STAFF RECRUITMENT MONITORING

The following tables show the total number of applications received in respect of each protected characteristic and the respective percentage breakdowns for the total number of people shortlisted for interview and offered a position. 51 vacancies were advertised during the academic year 2023/24 for which a total of 1057 applications were received, and 195 candidates interviewed. As a Disability Confident employer, all applicants who met the minimum role criteria and who also declared a disability were interviewed. Out of 51 roles, five were filled with the assistance of external agencies and six were internal moves or promotion, therefore the total offers number used for the report is 40 based on the data on offers made to direct and new applicants via iTrent.

Recruitment disability monitoring				
Disability breakdown	Total number of applications	% all applicants	% interviewed	% offer made
Declared disabled	91	9	7	10
Not known to be disabled	966	91	93	90
TOTAL %	1057	100%	100%	100%

Recruitment gender monitoring				
Gender breakdown	Total number of applications	% All applicants	% interviewed	% offer made
Male	418	40	42	57.5
Female	593	56	53	42.5
Not Provided	46	4	5	0
TOTAL %	1057	100%	100%	100%

Recruitment ethnicity monitoring				
Ethnicity breakdown	Total number of applications	% All applicants	% interviewed	% offer made
White	593	56	68	70
Ethnically diverse	365	35	26	25
Not provided	99	9	6	5
TOTAL %	1057	100%	100%	100%

Recruitment Age Monitoring				
Age (as at 01/07/2023)	Total number of applications	% All applicants	% interviewed	% offer made
Under 34	635	60	60.5	57.5
35-49	224	21	21.5	32.5
Over 50	135	13	14	10
Not provided	63	6	4	0
TOTAL %	1057	100%	100%	100%

Recruitment religion or belief monitoring				
Religion or belief breakdown	Total number of applications	% All applicants	% interviewed	% offer made
Christian	250	24	20	15
Other (inc Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh)	152	14	9	7.5
Spiritual	50	5	5	10
No religion	409	39	48	55
Prefer not to say	117	11	11	7.5
Not provided	79	7	7	5
TOTAL %	1057	100%	100%	100%

Sexuality monitoring				
Sexual orientation monitoring	Total number of applications	% all applicants	% interviewed	% offer made
Heterosexual/straight	685	65	64	62.5
Gay/lesbian	67	6	9	10
Bisexual	116	11	11	10
Prefer not to say	111	11	11	7.5
Other	24	2	2	5
Unknown (data unavailable)	54	5	3	5
TOTAL %	1057	100%	100%	100%